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The
DOUBLE DEALER
".....I can deceive them both by speaking the truth."

THE POLITICALLY MINDED

I REMEMBER startling an anarchist gathering a year or so ago by the statement that it would not interest me very much to throw a bomb at a politician. I might have electrified a similar audience of conventional taxpayers by adding that it would not interest me very much to prevent one being thrown. The politically minded are and have been divided into myriad groups. They comprise about ninety-five percent of all the prosperous or fairly prosperous population: Republican, Single-taxer, Bolshevik, Whig, Guelph, Democrat, Ghibbeline, Tory or Imperialist—they have as many names as they have high pitched convictions. Underneath and throughout, however, one essential belief unifies them all; the belief that it matters terrifically what name the rulers of a country elect to call themselves.

But, of course, the politically minded have a more elaborate creed than that, embellishments of the central idea. They believe that the happiness of the individual, the significance of a civilization, are problems that can be solved by legislation.

Outside this overwhelmingly articulate group are a few despised individuals who shrewdly suspect that it cannot matter to them whether the Republicans or the Democrats hold their majority in the Senate. This pitiful minority of "bad" citizens to which I have the honor of belonging believes that a reasonable amount of law and order must be kept, by those fitted for the job, but is entirely cynical anent the unselfishness of those who propose themselves for the task. It thinks that government in the nature of things is a system of giving and accepting favors, that politicians more or less frankly hang out the sign "favors for cash and cash for favors." Furthermore it considers that there is not any more real difference between the Soviet government of Russia, the Democracy of the United States, and the Empire of Japan than between three candidates for the position of tax collector of County Clare.

In every instance of governmental power there are the same elements: the real hidden authority and the one gorgeous person who nods in ermine from his limousine to his subjects. These cynics see also the money which is fuel to the machine and the brute force which stands behind this authority and which is paid in smiles and bows. Once monarchs rode through the streets scattering largesse, small coins to the populace; now the people are allowed to drop into a slot a piece of paper stamped opposite the name of a man whom their newspaper, father or caprice favors.

But my minority and I have nothing to quarrel with in all this. We refuse to get indignant with those who do quarrel but who yet uphold some other system. Big Endians and little Endians, nevertheless they perform a useful, or at least necessary service. They guarantee the comparative safety of our lives, wives and silver.

Only we believe that there are more important and interesting things in the world than politics. A beautiful picture, a fine sonata, a novel of Joseph Conrad seems to us more darkly significant to human life than the result of the gubernatorial primary. We see a problem in our lives which is unaffected by the tariff revision, a hope and a despair which remain after the aspirations of the liberals have all been satisfied. And we would feel not a little stuffy in the new heaven and the new earth under the banner of any band of the politically minded.

IN THE ABSENCE OF DOCTOR SWIFT

WHAT America needs, they tell us at considerable length, is a great satirist, a colossal bubble-burster. A Rabelais, a Swift, a Juvenal, say the wise heads, would be a better physic for the nation than defeat in battle.

We are tempted to agree that nothing could be more apropos in the commonwealth just now than the presence of some behemoth of humor who would paint our composite portrait for our chagrin and edification—some genius equipped with the eye of God and a fluent pen who would paint us as we appear to celestial intelligences.

But this gigantic and ironical person of our dreams is not in sight. We will doubtless be vainly awaiting him when we are as grey as goosedown or bald as coots.

Meantime, it is possible one could substitute for this imagined champion of common sense a real comic journal. It is even possible that a journal would afford the superior national physic.

No nation offers richer material for satire, no nation, perhaps, needs it more. It is the ideal locus for a great humorist—why not, then, for a great comic journal?

It seems to me the opportunity for some one to do a great service and incidentally make a pile of money is ready to hand. America has nothing approaching a real satirical, a real comic periodical. The man who starts one will make a fortune—unless the state of intelligence in the republic is at so low an ebb that he cannot find sufficient contributors.

This latter eventuality, I confess, I shudderingly fear.

MR. HERGESHEIMER'S HENS

BE it confessed at start I am no Hergesheimer fan. Four only of his opuses have come before my critical eye, to-wit: "The Three Black Pennys," "Linda Condon," "San Cristobal de la Habana," and, very lately, "Cytherea." What lies between the covers of "The Lay Anthony," "Mountain Blood" and "Java Head," etc., I don't know nor do I seem to care. Odd, too, for despite the fact that the Pennys, Linda and Cytherea aroused my interest enough to

stick with them to the finish, I am not at all curious nor do I seem to care what manner of persons or mechanics the other books contain.

Truth told, Joseph Hergesheimer remains an unsatisfactory writer on many counts. He doesn't seem to be able to hold his reader. Interest flags. Situations seem trivial. Little things are over-stressed. Big things minified. Banalities abound. And always his male is pitiful. A fathead, a dub, a dunce. Observe Lee Randon in "Cytherea"—a flabbier specimen even than Norris's Philip Baldwin in "Brass," who, by every token, is the damndest duffer I have yet encountered in recent fiction. Still, Mr. Hergesheimer doesn't seem to intend this Randon to be a duffer. I hazard that to him Randon personifies the strong, vital he-man.

The first half of "Cytherea" is lamentably cheap and tedious. Were you not aware that Mr. Hergesheimer is an artist in words and that this "Cytherea" had been bruited by many critics as perhaps his admirablest conception, you might have tossed the book aside in disgust. But you hang on. And, by Venus, you are rewarded. Enter Savina, Mrs. William Loyd Grove! *Suum cuique*—Hergesheimer is indubitably a limner of women! Where Cabell paints his cock in gaudy front and feather, Hergesheimer limns his hen in all her native subtlety and savage naivete!

Yes, Mr. Hergesheimer is unquestionably the artist when he depicts woman. Not Thomas Hardy, nor Dreiser, nor Willa Cather, not D. H. Lawrence, nor W. L. George give us woman humaner, vitaler, realer, nakeder than he. His women breathe, move, feel, cry, laugh, love, live, about you and all over the page. Savina and Linda are your women as well as his and their lovers'. You sense them. You lie with them, dream with them, plan with them. Odd isn't it that a writer who has this uncatchable knack of knowing woman should attempt anything else and in the attempt, of course, fail miserably?

Why doesn't Mr. Hergesheimer cull from eld the Helens, Cleopatras and Sapphos of history and depict them with his inimitable delicacy and grace to the edification and enlightenment of mere man? And the DuBarry, Pompadour sisterhood? What we glimpse of them is got only through the musty kaleidoscopia of quasi-historic hacks.

Savina Grove stands a vital character, a fine, live, passionate woman. The same might be said of the Penny women and Linda. Mr. Hergesheimer stalks and seizes the sex as none other among his contemporaries here or abroad. With all his limitations, his iterations, his confounded little mannerisms, when he paints woman, like Leonardo his Lisa, he shows you her soul, as well as her body—and more.

To Cabell, his cocks; to Hergesheimer, his hens.

THE REFUGEES

LESS than a decade ago the prestige of resident American men and women of letters was seriously threatened by the voluntary exile of writers who, from the dynamic nature of their characters and the real significance of their work, were vitally needed at home. It is possible that only the war prevented an exodus that would eventually have included nearly every original genius in the democracy.

Youngsters of talent, wearied by the obtuseness of their native audience and by the frank hostility and amazement with which the populace viewed the arts, found it impossible to resist the suave and hospitable lure of the continent. A little proud and a little conceited, they took refuge overseas, whence, from aeries of one sort or another, they hurled imprecations at the mob which they had left behind.

They fell in there with men and women of real culture; they felt the rising sap of ancient literatures which are continuously young, and they experimented in a friendly atmosphere with new ideas, new forms, and unhackneyed emotions (all of which were more or less anathema in this incredible commonwealth).

And this was very fine and they wrote very well (perhaps, in some cases, immortally) and they were acclaimed very pleasingly. They even achieved, thanks to their disdain, great honor at home.

This exile of theirs was sincerely incurred. Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, H. D., Robert Frost, John Gould Fletcher, Skipwith Cannell, Horace Holley, to name but a few—these writers found in the far countries that which they lacked here. They were honestly more happy abroad, they honestly felt that they did better work there, and they were quite sure that that work was more appreciated abroad than at home. Anyway, it is fascinating to be an exile. And the young intellectuals, before the war came on, had left or were leaving America with a cavalier farewell.

(Meanwhile, a point of some consequence, the junior writers and aspirants in America were deprived of the really much needed stimulus which the presence and example of their wandering countrymen could have afforded them.)

The vogue of European exile, however, is passing. And I suspect that even the hardiest of those refugees of a decade ago casts amicable glances now and then at the boisterous, raucous, illiterate, famished and morally rampant democracy which he fled. I believe, to be sure, that for another decade much of the finest writing from American pens will issue from studios and garrets in Paris, London and Rome. There is no denying that a great deal of the rich blood of current American literature has been transfused to the continent in the last twelvemonth. But the vogue is passing.

The refugees have felt heretofore that it was necessary in the absence of a national tradition to engraft themselves actually upon another nation's tradition. They have felt the need of actual contact with the stream of civilized thought. They have felt the need of walking in ancient streets, of looking at ancient things. They have sought the reality of antiquity—the feel of it, the touch of it. But they are coming to realize, perhaps, that the finest literature and the finest art springs, not out of reality, not out of experience, but out of dreams, and that one can dream perhaps better, after all, in one's birthplace.

It is true, you know, that "Jurgen" and the collected poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson were penned or typed in America—in just this turbulent democracy which the refugees have spurned.

America today is calling its artists

home. This barbaric commonwealth offers them as gaudy and as varied a panorama of the human comedy as they can find in the world. And it is developing swiftly, as the refugees are coming to learn, a large, alert and sympathetic audience for artists and thinkers.

The democracy is in labor and among its progeny in the next half century (a progeny which will include undoubtedly economic and political institutions as absurd as any on record) will be some beautiful and masterly books. And these, it is safe to say, will be mostly written at home.

SAW AND GUFFAWS

JUDGE not that ye be not judged. Gospel according to Saints Matthew or Luke, as you prefer. Budge not that ye be not budged. Fudge not lest ye be fudged. Saws the world through its sawyers. By which I point neither mockery nor moral.

But what are truths? and what are proverbs? and what are maxims? and what are laws? Seed for caged canaries. Cheese to trap rodents. Scare-crows to scare crows. Deity's barrage.

I, man, claim right to judge whom, what and whenever I please, if so I please. I, man, adjudicate to myself this thing good, that bad; this appearance, emotion, happening good or bad as I see it good or bad.

Who'll say me nay? Shall I be guided by the sophistries of some cringing mediaeval cleric bowdlerizing Christ or Saint to accommodate his individual qualms and phobias?

Tell me, friend, would you withhold an opinion, a judgment, on this or that thing, this or that movement, this or that person for fear this or that thing, movement, person, might turn about and judge you? Would you? I think not.

All these old saws, however pat they are for Pat, for Jake, are not necessarrily jake. Judge and be judged, or damned if it follows. God loves a fighter. Put yourself in his place (providing you accept Him, why not?). Would you become insulted if some poor specimen of your handiwork stood by and cursed you roundly? Would you rage? Not really. You'd guffaw. Ha! you'd laugh and ho! you'd laugh. What a boy it is!

Judge not that ye be not judged. Fudge not lest ye be fudged. Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack jump over the candle stick—*Nolite judicare.*

And God guffaws.

SIR TAX

HAVING just completed, check and all, my income tax returns for the year 1921 (now dead and gone the way of all dead years) I sit me down to write. Of what shall I write? Of what *must* I write? Well, of what, eh? Taxes, damn 'em, taxes! Since the momentous day that pimply-faced Serbian sophomore filled the Arch-duke Ferdinand of Austria full of lead, what have we had? Wars, riots, insurrections, strikes, talk, talk, talk, and—taxes, damn 'em, taxes.

Federal taxes. State taxes. City taxes. Income taxes. Property taxes. Stamp taxes. Auto taxes. Luxury taxes (candy, coco-cola, cravats, che-

mises, etc.). Inheritance tax, direct tax, indirect tax and surtax. Verily, Sir Tax! (God forgive the pun.)

Sir Tax, I salute you. Thou art indeed overlord of life today. I doff last season's Dobbs in humble obeisance to your sly young highness. See, I elevate you beyond your degree. A monarchical one at that. Democracies be damned! Where are they? Lordships, fiefships, single taxes, double taxes, triple taxes. Days gone. Other ages. Other lands. Other days. What holds? Taxes, damn 'em, taxes!

Sir Tax, I salute you. You are here to stay. You have always been, you always will be. Well, why the outburst? O, nothing, only that young squirt of an attorney who filled out my return for me just now upon being informed that I was about to perpetrate what we call an "editorial" (out of courtesy to one another) suggested that I write about taxes. Well, what do *I* know about taxes? Nothing! And what do I want to know about taxes? Nothing!! And what does anyone want to know about taxes, that is, anyone but senators, C. P. A.'s and young squirts of attorneys? NOTHING!!!

Boy, page the Collector of Infernal Revenue.

Ruins

By PAUL ELDRIDGE.

Gray and black rats swing upon the rope,
And the weary bell bends and rings
Clang-Clang—
The rusty tongue breaks the intricate bars
Of the Spider, subtle jailer,
And strikes, drearily, a paralytic tune:
Clang-Clang—

An old woman on the roadside kneels,
And mutters: "Lord, have mercy!"

Gray and black rats swinging on a rope,
And a dead bell ringing,
And a dead god crumbling
Above a broken altar . . .

The Jade Piece

By CHARLES J. FINGER

ONCE, having bought a meal for a hobo, he gave me a piece of jade rather oddly carved, and not much larger than one's thumb. I carried it about in my pocket awhile, then, tiring of it, gave it to Pearson, who likes odd things, and so forgot all about it.

Last Sunday evening, while lounging about my place, I saw a very quiet, decent fellow walking, so I hailed him and we fell into conversation. He was a spare-built, brown-faced man of early middle age, and his hands were not the hands of a manual worker and I was at a loss to guess his association with any particular calling or profession. He talked well and there was a certain blended softness and sternness about him, somewhat of the manner of a capable and kindly physician. Because he looked closely at a beetle that crawled across the top of a fence post by which he stood, I thought he might be interested in entomology. It came with a little shock when, without overmuch preface, he described the piece of jade with unusual vividness and asked me if it could be easily obtainable. "I chanced on the man who gave it to you in El Paso," he said, at which I expressed my astonishment.

Now like most men who pride themselves on their freedom from superstition, I have had many pocket pieces in my day—odd things such as a Chinese coin, a trilobite, a chapter penny, a lucky monkey, and so on, but memory of the jade and its disposition had vanished with the rest and it took quite an effort to remember. Then it flashed across my mind and, "Pearson, by George," I said, quite pleased, and he followed by asking me where Pearson lived. When I told him that he was a young physician, a near neighbor, he was all for starting off at once, but seemed not ill-pleased when I said that I would walk over with him, having nothing to do that evening.

Pearson was glad to see us, and he got busy in his quick, hospitable way, pulling chairs up to the fireside and piling on a new log. I explained the jade business and he turned to the stranger at once, saying, "Of course you may have it... No, I wouldn't think of selling it. It was a gift. And really it's of no intrinsic value. Besides, I know how it is when a man wants to complete a collection. I'm that way about books." He fussed about as he talked, turning things over in a little drawer which he had taken from a desk. There was a conglomeration; a flint arrow or two, a silver ornament, a few opals, even an old-time handmade nail, which, as he explained in parenthesis, came from a house in which General Grant had lived; but he failed to find the jade and was visibly annoyed. "If it isn't the devil," he said. "I could have sworn that I'd have laid my hand on it. Besides, I take a pride in being orderly." Then he paused quite perplexed, evidently at the end of

his string, and I tried to be helpful with suggestions as to likely places.

"I think," said the visitor quietly and with an air of slight apology, "that you will find it in a black box in the attic."

Pearson looked up quite startled. "Black box," he said, "we have no black box." After a moment he snapped his fingers. "I have though, now I come to think of it. An old-fashioned tea-caddy of my sister's. But how the dickens—" He regarded the visitor with a doubtful face for a moment, then left the room and we next heard him bumping about in the attic. Soon he re-entered triumphantly with both box and jade. "By all the gods; a coincidence if you like," he exclaimed, and I was no less mentally entangled so that we regarded one another foolishly.

"Excuse me," said the stranger gravely as he accepted the jade. "I know that it must seem like a silly trick—" and paused.

"Not at all," said Pearson politely, but his remark was clearly interrogatory.

I helped him out with "It's odd, of course."

"That kind of thing must look like nonsense, like charlatanry," continued the stranger. He glanced at the ornament casually as he spoke. "In all common decency I ought to explain, but, the truth is, that with very natural prejudices, you could not be expected to be sympathetic."

Pearson nodded at that, and I cleared my throat.

"Religious prejudices, especially," the man went on evenly.

"As to that," I said, "we are not exactly hide-bound, either of us." Somehow I felt strangely disposed to the man. He seemed to me to be lonely, and there was a drawn anxiety about his face, and the lines in it were accentuated by the leaping firelight.

"It really does not matter," murmured Pearson with an air of dismissing the matter. "The incident was peculiar. And obviously you could not have known—" He indicated the box with a nod.

"Not until I came into the house," said the other and seemed for a moment to collect his thoughts. "Then I did."

Hearing that we stared at him; stared for almost half a minute, but he seemed to be unaware of the scrutiny and regarded the blazing logs fixedly.

After a while Pearson said, "Of course, I don't quite follow," but the man seemed not to hear him. Pearson went on with a certain faltering tone, "There may be something in this telepathy stuff, but I never quite believed it."

What the stranger said then seemed quite inconsequent. It was, "It will seem odd, but I have not spoken two dozen consecutive words at any English-speaking man for more than ten years. Even now—" He left the sentence unfinished, leaned back in his chair and thrust his hands in his pockets. It was an awkward pause and I lit my pipe by way of easing the situation, regarding his serious face the while.

"Living abroad?" questioned Pearson.

"I came from Bolivia for the jade," he said.

"Where?" interrupted Pearson. "South America?... The thing's not at all valuable, is it?" He took the jade from the mantel where the stranger had laid it and examined it curiously,

almost as though he then saw it for the first time. The man produced a similar piece from his pocket and pointed out a broken corner at the base, then, taking the other from Pearson, fitted the ends and it was at once clear that they were portions of a whole. Our three heads were together then and the stranger pointed out the figure of a design which seemed to be a series of masks joining, a kind of a multiplication of a human face.

"The other half, as you see," said the man.

"Obviously," agreed Pearson.

"But it's difficult to see how a thing such as that would be worth a trip from South America," said I.

"Yes. Until you understand. For one thing it forms a part of a kind of shrine ornament. It is, in its way, as unique as a page from a book of which only one copy was extant."

"Ah! I see, I see," said Pearson. "That's interesting. I'm glad you found us and it... So you are enamored of your adopted country, eh? Eager to get back... And how's business down there? Things lively? Many revolutions? And what do you do?"

"A servant of the gods," was the quiet reply, and there was no mistaking the ring of quiet sincerity.

"Of—what?" questioned Pearson, highly incredulous. "Er—will you please say that again? Did I understand?" He leaned forward in his interest.

Very distinctly the stranger repeated. "A servant of the gods." There was no hesitation. He sat there quite unconcerned. There was no excitement, no effort to impress. Yet, immediately, there flashed across my mind a doubt as to his sanity.

As a last hope I clutched at an idea. "A missionary, I suppose," I hazarded. "A preacher, or something like that," but he shook his head.

At that I caught Pearson's eye and he raised his eyebrows at me over the stranger's head. My friend was evidently nervous. He was toying with the hand-made nail I have mentioned, drawing it backwards and forwards through his fingers.

But the stranger went on, monotonous and grave. "You think me insane, or the victim of some hallucination," he said, looking up suddenly and catching Pearson in the very act of shaking his head at me warningly. That, of course, made Pearson more nervous still, so much so, indeed, that, with an involuntary motion, he flicked the nail into the fire, and, to cover his confusion, seized the poker to fish it out again. But the nail fell into a little fire cavern of violet and gold, and Pearson's clumsy efforts to retrieve it only buried it deeper.

"It really doesn't matter," he said as he replaced the poker, and at that moment there was a knock at the door and a clumsy, shy country lad appeared, shamefacedly scratching his head, with his cap in his hand, by way of salute.

It was a call. An insistent call. The doctor was urgently needed on a maternity case and there was no way to get out of it. So there were moments of uncomfortable bustle, of hurried *adieux*, of promises to return soon, and I was left alone with the stranger.

The *intermezzo* of confusion had broken our train of thought. For a little, nothing was said. My thoughts turned continually to my suspicions.

"His nail will be spoiled by the heat," said the man, as he pointed to the little

red glow into which it had fallen. He bent forward and peered into the fire. Then, quite deliberately he thrust his hand into the red mass, parting the live embers with his fingers this way and that, as one might part soft grass, and brought out the white hot iron. I was thunderstruck. I gasped and could say nothing. Was it pure hallucination? But no. I looked again, taking particular notice. There were the disarranged coals and the little hole with incandescent flames, and he was leaning back in his chair with lightly clasped hands holding the nail as I would hold a lead pencil. As I looked, he unclasped his hands, moving back so as to rest his wrist on the end of the chair arm, and as he did so, the nail chanced to touch the wood, and I smelt varnish. I tell the thing as it happened. I could not believe it, but eyes, ears, nose confirmed the thing. As for him, there was no bravado, no show-off. Rather was there an air of slight regret as of one who had done a thing he should not have done. Indeed, he turned to me saying, "I'm sorry that happened. I don't want to seem silly and psychic." That destroyed my last hope of its being a visual illusion. I felt very, very uncomfortable and found myself wishing that Pearson had told me where the lamps were kept, and regretting that we sat in a rapidly darkening room. Little things, too, made me vaguely uncomfortable; the hollow rumbling of a distant train, the rising wind and especially the great leaping shadow of the stranger that I discerned on the wall.

"I am sorry," said the man, "because these minor things awaken prejudice. A suspicion of charlatanry."

"That's how I always felt about miracles," I nerved myself to say, and he nodded.

"Mere incidentals," he said. Then he seemed to be considering, but, after a moment or so, added, "Of course, you wouldn't prove a sublime truth by seeming to change water into wine, or anything like that... So forget that incident. Consider it closed."

I gave a kind of acquiescent cough.

Then he fell to talking and told me many things in a curiously leaping kind of way, taking much for granted, too much altogether, and I do not think that he suspected how much I failed to understand. In a way it was like an astronomer explaining the universe to a man ignorant of the multiplication table. Now and then there were whole spaces very clear to me, but again I was hopelessly lost. It was mighty interesting at first, especially when he told me of his first setting eyes on the Second Temple of Quetzalcoatl near Palenque and I found myself regretting my poor geographical knowledge. Talking thus, he seemed to me a peculiarly charming and winning character.

"Mind you," he said, "I had come upon the place without suspecting its existence, in a land that is one great, wild, untidy, luxuriant hot-house; an entangled jungle in the still, glowing noonday of a subtropical climate. The dense foliage hid the ground with darkest shade and above was a most brilliant green. Then the Temple. White and great, and two stories high, with a great doorway and black yawning windows on either side, and others again above. A home of pale gods that slept. There, in the wilds, with screaming birds, and huge butterflies so beautiful that none could look at without a catching of the

heart, stood the deserted temple, a temple erected to one who had taught men to melt and to forge metals into useful implements, to cut precious stones, to write, to conduct their affairs of state, to improve their morals and religion so that good manners and happiness reigned until—mark this—until an inferior civilization coming with brute force, wiped all out. And there I learned things of other lands and of other peoples."

II

UP to that point all had been easy sailing and we got along well with an occasional interjection on my part of "Yes, I follow," or, "I've read something of the sort," or a mere "Hm?" with an interrogatory inflection, and once I got in something about Zoroaster and ancient Persia, but he went on headlong. Then, of a sudden, it was deep water and I was listening to a description of some lost city in the Valley of the Urabamba, the which, I seemed to gather, was either in Peru or Bolivia. I made a mental note to look it up. In much that he said I followed in part only. His telling made me visualize so that my listening mind lost something. I heard, plainly enough: "A considerable city, doubtless, perched precariously on a hill side, all terraced. Stone terraced gardens, elaborate aqueducts, wonderful roads were there... A people of tremendous thrift... I poked about, sometimes finding things, odd pieces of pottery, inscriptions which of course I could not read, queer kind of hieroglyphics and pictures of things part human, part animal, and once I found a little gold ornament. Then, one late afternoon I was in one of those moods that come on a man now and then, for I had been gazing out to the west at a kind of golden haze. My mind had been running on the idea that the noblest way to dispose of one's dead body would be to have it burned on a pyre of sweet smelling wood open to the air, and placed on the summit of some mighty hill. That I recall very distinctly. You see, the idea of my body returning to be embosomed in the elements filled me. Suddenly, I had a notion that some one was sitting directly behind me. At first I thought it was a dream, yet again I knew it was not that because of the sobering reality of things about me. And I had the fear that something would happen to change things, to ruin them irretrievably, just as sometimes in the midst of a fine piece of music, you fear that a violin string will snap. And, if you can understand, the presence had its message for me and it came to me, or to my mind, clear and very distinct and word for word."

"No one speaking? No words?" I interjected.

He paused and regarded me awhile with a peculiarly disconcerting gaze.

"Had you been there you might have heard nothing," he said gravely. "Put in this way. You have to-day, and in civilization, your wireless telephony. What to us is silence may yet be very intelligible to a man sitting in the room, supposing him to have his equipment. Or put it this way. Several may be listening to a violin record on a phonograph—played in harmonies, but a few notes in a passage may be very distinctly audible to everyone there except one, though he may hear notes that are both higher and lower in pitch. Take—"

"An analogy. The blind spot in the

retina," I said. "I begin to understand. Go on."

"Mind you, I heard no words," he went on. "But the impression was very much like the impression one has in a dream except that the message was clear, and, as I have said, verbally distinct. How I understood that the Presence had a name and that it was Capac, I cannot tell you. But this was the message, and, if you pay close attention, you will find that you memorize it at once. This:

'When we depart from this world,
Guilty souls pay the penalty.

A judge sitteth beneath the earth,
Telling their doom with stern compulsion.

But the good enjoy the sun by day and night alike,
Theirs is a life free from toil,
Not vexing the earth with the labor of their hands,
Nor the waters of the sea for a scanty subsistence.

But with the august divinities
They enjoy a tearless existence.'

So I arose and followed the being I could not see and presently came to the Temple of the Three Windows... I cannot tell you about that. There were strange beings there and I understood that what we look upon as fantastic myths of a lost people could be interpreted to have a high and a worthy meaning. I came to see without grief, very soon, that the millions of today who toil and worry would be as nothing in a hundred years and that man was a lost creature hurrying to his own destruction. I saw that it was true, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that there were forms arising wonderfully, developing, swiftly, beings most glorious, endowed with a strange consciousness which would some day replace man on the earth, or use man as a slave as men use horses."

I was too amazed at that to follow him. My mind went off into fantastic speculations. The cycles of creation and of dissolution as mere divine play? The human race to disappear, as oligarchies and tyrannies have disappeared? True, civilizations of great achievement and greater promise had been wiped out incontinently, but surely not ours, not this? I wrenched myself to the surface again.

"The curious thing," he was saying, and with the manner of a man who makes a common explanatory remark, "is that in some cases there seems to have been a failure to develop, but in others, it seems as if the best in the animal has been raised to the highest power and amalgamated with the best in man. I mean spiritually. It is a kind of human excellence attained by what we call lower creatures. It is the esoteric meaning of the extraordinary figures you may have seen in ancient Peruvian sculpture and some Egyptian: man-beasts, man-birds, man-reptiles... I have seen creatures dancing with all the grace of playing birds. Imagine graceful girl children endowed with the song of the nightingale and the lightness of swifts, the beauty of the quetzal and the grace of the swan. Imagine graceful youths (you have always to think of the divine shape of men and women), youths with that exquisite tint of healthy skin endowed with the agility and the swiftness of young deer... The fullness of physical life, the grace and the perfection of man and beast; the hunger for, the striving toward and the insatiable desire of love, love divine

and beautiful, the adoration of beauty. And sentient, intelligent flowers who, doing wrong, go out like a flame... There's a stupendous gulf of mystery that I cannot bridge for you... These creatures aim at things eternal, at beauty, and all that disregard these must disappear from the earth. So Capac taught me... So there can be no human perpetuity, for man does not know the beauty of the simple things... Man is the helpless factotum of vain and foolish destinies. Man neither believes nor trusts."

Now at that I felt very uncomfortable. There was a very decided opinion forming itself that my visitor was on the borderland, the dangerous borderland between sanity and the reverse. I sought for something to say—something to test him. Then, and it gave me a shock, he turned to me, and, while a sad smile illuminated his features, he said, "But you need not think that."

"What?" I said helplessly.

"It was plain to read," he returned. Then after a pause, "Life as it is lived is a stupid farce. You have thought that many times and the thought has come to millions... No one has abiding faith in ideals—in spiritual ideals, and at the bottom, all that modern progress means is the preservation of atrophied souls in bodies that wax fat in idleness and luxury. Bear that in mind. And also this, for thus you will know that the singer, the poet, the rejected one in the commercial whirl bears the light aloft. No sincere expression of the human spirit, struck out in the glow of some moment of intense vision, ever wholly loses its vitality. Hence—"

"But what you have said would mean that man himself must soon die from the face of—"

"It need not be said," he continued evenly, "Man is an encumbrance on the face of the earth. And you see how fast the forces of evil seem to crush out high hopes and neutralize the best promise. The visions given to—"

"But evolution, the work of the ages that leads to man, the apogee—" I began excitedly.

"Please do not interrupt," he said. "My time is very short. I must leave on the train that goes at eleven, so have but little time. It will take me an hour to walk to town... But a word. Consider your wars; the constant and sustained increase of crime, of lunacy and of mental defect; the new and strange and baffling diseases, influenzas; your economic upheavals... Suppose rats, let us say, after a riotous time in a barn began to discover that there were queer disorders that affected their very existence. Obviously they would never suspect that man was at the bottom of the trouble, was, in a word, trying to eradicate them as a nuisance."

"You mean—?" I questioned eagerly.

"This. That there are potent forces at work and very actively. That man is in the position of the rats we spoke of. That he is a destroyer of the earth and of beauty. That he is mischievous. That he has not risen to the heights of self-knowledge, self-control and self-sacrifice necessary to lead onward and upward. That intelligent forces have sown the seeds of discord, of anger, of unrest, of rebellion and of social and political disturbance just as man himself in turn has inoculated what he considers as pests... This is all incredible to you, I know. But look into past ages,

The pterodactyl would have found the prophecy of its racial disappearance from the earth equally incredible, equally preposterous... The line of action foreshadowed is necessary to reverse the process of decay, of destructiveness. The occupation of the earth by man was an episode, a preparation, a trial of strength. There is something to come, the arrival of a higher creature than any that has yet occupied the globe."

"But the whole scheme of Christianity—" I protested.

"The experiment of the Wayward One among the gods," he replied. "Capac told me of the plea for man, the attempt to teach men, to lead men. I heard the whole pathetic mystery and saw it in a new light—the supreme effort, the confessed failure, the cry, '*Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani*'. He found the salvation of the chosen ones impossible, and suffered ignominy on the earth and among men, and the pity of the fellow gods. For what you call Christianity, is but the husk of the thing itself."

No more was said. The stranger drew himself up, bade me a good night and went out.

I sat there pondering for hours, until Pearson returned and entered boisterously.

"Where's the thought reader?" he asked jocularly. Then I told him the whole tale.

"Of course, it's all vast nonsense," he said. "And you were more than half asleep when I came in." That charge I denied as untrue and felt a faint twinge of anger.

"Coming back, I thought of that Blavatsky woman," said Pearson. "There's that Palladino, too. I think Hamlin Garland wrote a book about her. But what occurs to me is what kind of a show would that fellow have made with Huxley, or Darwin, or Herbert Spencer firing questions at him?"

I said nothing more, but, as I prepared to leave, I glanced at the arm of the chair in which the visitor had been sitting, and there was the mark of the hot nail sure enough. I touched it, too, with my finger tips and felt the ridge of it. But that I kept to myself, knowing the impossibility of trying to shake Pearson.

Art

By CALE YOUNG RICE.

An invisible worker
Drives grey nails of rain
Drenchingly into the earth.
He is building floors of grass and pavilions of trees,
To be hued a little hence with the breath of blossoms.
He is shaping his House of Life.....

I had rather build a blade of grass
Than self-entombing pyramids.

Sarah Threeneedles

(Boston, 1698.)

By KATHERINE LEE BATES

By the grim grace of the Puritans she had been brought
  Into their frigid meeting-house to list
Her funeral sermon before the rope ran taut.
  Soft neck that he had kissed!

Through the narrow window her dazed blue eyes could see
  The rope. Like a glittering icicle it hung
From the hoar cross-beam of the horrible gallows-tree.
  His arms about her flung!

Two captive Indians and one Guinea slave,
  Hating at heart the merciless white God,
In the stubborn ground were hacking her shallow grave.
  Sweet April path they trod!

Her shivering neighbors thrilled to the fierce discourse
  Of the minister, who thundered the dire sting
Of a sinner's death till his vehement voice went hoarse.
  She heard love's whispering.

And still she stood while the frozen communion bread,
  That the preacher broke ere he poured the chilly wine,
Rattling into the plates, her judges fed.
  Her food was more divine.

Ronald Firbank

By CARL VAN VECHTEN

"VALMOUTH"... a decorative young man caught my attention. "Valmouth... I will send it down to you," he added, after a significant pause.

Ignorant as to whether Valmouth was a liqueur or a new variety of dog, with some curiosity I awaited Stuart Rose's gift, which, when it came, displayed qualities inherent in both these surmises... and yet, it was not either. "Valmouth" was a book. The wrapper, probably for some good reason, was fashioned of oilcloth and displayed a quaint design in color by Augustus John and the author's name, Ronald Firbank. I sat down to peruse a page or two. I rose an hour later, having read the book through, a reading interrupted here and there by spasms of merriment or a pause for a nod of astonishment. Valmouth, indeed! with its lusty impatient peacocks and parties, its portrait of the always surprising Mrs. Hurstpierpont, Lady Parvoula de Panzoust, and her pursuit of the josephian shepherd, and, above all, that ripping old coon, Mrs. Yajñavalkya, procuress and masseuse, who in the midst of the most utter nigger jargon, inserts such phrases as *"plein air!"* The opus ends with an amazing wedding, as smartly attended as the Princess Mary's, in which the protagonists are a juvenile English naval officer and the young negress, Niri-Esther. And just before this coda, the author of the symphony has indicated an opportunity for a superb cadenza.

It is high time that the world should know something of the works of Ronald Firbank, all of which are published in a most attractive format, with illustrations not only by Augustus John, but also by Rothenstein, Félicien Rops, and Albert Buhrer. The titles are "Valmouth," "Caprice," "Vainglory," "The Princess Zabouroff" (a play), "Inclinations," "Santal," and "Odette." The first three are the best and they should be read in the order noted. (This is important.) Sophisticated virgins and demi-puceaux will adore these books. Married or unmarried persons over thirty will find them either shocking or tiresome, depending on the individual temperament of the reader. I have a suspicion that a few delightful old ladies will have a quiet closet laugh on the sly. They are not books for public libraries and Brander Matthews and William Lyon Phelps will never review them.

To be 1890 in 1890 might be considered almost normal. To be 1890 in 1922 might be considered almost queer. There is a difference, however. The color is magenta. Oscar's color was green. The fun is warmer; the vice is more *léger*. Félicien Rops rides on a merry-go-round. There is no sentimentalism or irony in this work; hardly even cynicism. There is, indeed, something baffling about Firbank's lucidity, his gay firm grasp of his trivial peccancies. His ellipses serve the same purpose as the descending curtain at the end of the first act of "Die Walküre."

His form arranges itself for the most part in a diagram of dialogue... and such dialogue! In the argot of perversity one would call it camping. These mad romances are a Uranian version of Alice in Wonderland. Firbank, however, no matter how many ancient clouds of glory he trails behind him, and there is Greek, is more than up-to-date. He is the Pierrot of the minute. *Plus chic que le futurisme.* Aubrey Beardsley in a Rolls-Royce. Sacher-Masoch in Mayfair. *"A Rebours" à la mode.* Aretino in Piccadilly. Jean Cocteau at the Savoy. The Oxford tradition with a dash of the Paris *bains de vapeurs.* The cubists are remembered. Firbank plays Picasso's violin. Diverting boat-races are run off the coast of Lesbos. The decorations serve more than their purpose. Flippant, impertinent symbols are the tools of his manner. (Can it be possible that this impudent young man is satirizing D. H. Lawrence?) Fruits, flowers, bees, and even mice play eccentric rôles in these concentric comedies. Roses and nightingales impose their furtive intentions. "Valmouth" reminds one of a Queen giving away a tradesman's secrets. At last Peter Pan receives an affirmative reply to his long unanswered question.

Quotations would serve no purpose... Can one quote from a tapestry?...and they would be unseemly in a family paper. But I may permit myself to bring forward a short passage from "Vainglory," in which this jaunty, intrepid, if somewhat pale, original, speaking ostensibly of Harvester's Vaindreams, sums, perhaps, himself up:

> "He has such a strange, peculiar style. His work calls to mind a frieze with figures of varying heights trotting all the same way. If one should by chance turn about it's usually merely to stare or to sneer or to make a grimace. Only occasionally his figures care to beckon. And they seldom really touch."
>
> "He's too cold. Too classic, I suppose."
>
> "Classic! In the Encyclopedia Britannica his style is described as *odd spelling, brilliant and vicious.*"

The English reviews of Firbank's work have not been important (J. C. Squire, when queried during his recent American visit, is alleged to have declared he had never heard of Firbank), but it is well to remember that the *Daily Express* has said, "Young men with side-whiskers and maids in Assyrian jumpers are raving about Mr. Firbank's audacities." Well, they may! Grant Richards is the publisher of these casual audacities, in which cathedral towers and organ recitals are to be noted among the minor gems in a by no means despicable collection. They are still all obtainable in first editions and probably will be for about two weeks longer.

It is very impertinent to suffer martyrdom for an opinion—*Anatole France.*

Amirace In Rhidago

By HANIEL LONG.

One fine afternoon in a May, Dionysos, traveling under an assumed name, drifted like a leaf into Rhidago. The following narrative is taken from his "Anecdotes of Starry-Eyed Girls," volume 1295.

VIEWED from the lower bay, I like the look of Rhidago. Its dwellings were set in an amplitude of green spaces; and as the sun rose higher, I could see that the structures as they appeared through the palms, presented an infinite variety of tint. I landed upon a quay decorated with sculptured marble. The roofs of the warehouses were supported by Pentelican caryatids. The faces of all the carven maidens were the same, though gesture and drapery varied, and inscribed beneath each was a name that damascened the day, *Amirace*.

The townspeople were overflowing with life. The boys about the quay were apt at any moment to leap into the air, emitting odd sounds of satisfaction. The cabmen could not address their horses without passionate cries.

I walked up the central thoroughfare into a world of banyans and palms. The lamp-posts, of gold, rested on cloven hoofs, and their bases were shaggy. Along the streets were lawns and fountains, and everywhere were marble seats. Youths and maidens in flowing robes or skins of animals engaged in various occupations, some delivering groceries, others running races. A dozen or more maidens were drying innumerable pink, yellow and violet bodygarments on one sunny slope.

In the public square stood a noble monument. I approached, and found it dedicated to Amirace. The pedestal was draped in crimson velvet, and above the velvet rose the figure of the most extraordinary maiden I had ever beheld. She wore the hemaiteron, leaving one breast bare; and as the marble had been skilfully painted, I beheld a likeness which seemed life itself. The hair was black, the brow ivory, the lips carnelian; and in the countenance was something comforting, mingled with an intelligence hard to credit.

I asked a bystander, to whom the monument had been erected. He replied, "To her who taught the world to dance."

I said, "And does she live here?"

"Yonder," he replied, indicating a marble temple across the square.

Hearing this, I repaired to a cafe nearby; and sitting at a table on the pavement, in the open air, under a gold mohur-tree, I ordered a cooling drink. The longer I thought, the more amazing appeared to me the town and the maiden.

I determined to consult the proprietor, who was as vast a man as I had seen in years.

"How long," I inquired, "has the maiden Amirace been among you?"

He responded, for ten years.

I marvelled. "Tell me of her," I begged him.

"How it happened," he began impressively, "that the art of dancing should reach its perfection in Rhidago, is a

mystery. For once Rhidago, you know, more than any other town on the bay of Vesale, was a city of merchants and markets. Railroads from the far interior ran down to its quays; along the quays lay ships from every island in the seven oceans. Commerce and the art of dancing had hitherto been regarded as the antipodes of each other."

I liked the stately manner of my host.

"For another reason the world was astonished that Rhidago learned to dance. Our ancestors had handed down to us from time immemorial a unique custom of dress; though resentful, we had respected the tradition, and had gone about swathed in yards and yards, verily in kilometers, of cloth, leather and braided metal. Our hats were heavy as lead, and sometimes extended out from the head five or six feet. Our sandals were of stone, weighing rarely less than thirty pounds apiece for a grown man; and while it is true that a sandal of stone never needs a cobbler, you will agree with me, sir, that such footwear tends to make any motion difficult, and dancing really hazardous.

"But one morning this maiden established herself in rooms overlooking the city park, and posted a modest placard in the hall below to the effect that she could teach dancing to those who really desired to learn. The unusual wording of this notice disturbed the indifference of passers-by.

"The newcomer had astonishing success. An illustrious youth, reading the inscription on her door in a moment of weariness, concluded that it might be worth his while to look into the matter. He found his tutor to be both young and fair; and such effect did her instruction make upon him that he presently adopted a simplified form of clothing, and went almost dancing-mad. He began ardently to teach maidens to dance, and was soon the most followed youth in the town.

"But his fellows, growing jealous, asked him where he had his knowledge. He said, from Amirace the beautiful. And how does she instruct you? But he could say no more. This they thought strange enough; and indeed, it is a curious part of the story that none of the many youths who learned the art of dancing from Amirace could divulge to living soul the methods used by the enchanting maiden."

"This is an absorbing narrative," I interrupted. "And did she never fail?"

"Never, though millionaires, prime ministers, political economists and curators of classical museums came to her. Nor has she ever turned away a person. It is said that she can teach a pair of stilts to dance. It is no uncommon sight, I assure you, to see a dozen pair of stone sandals thrown from her casements in a single afternoon.

"Now, although her pupils were mute, her name soon became a household word. The podesta, himself a lively young fellow and one of her most active students, created an office called Mistress of the Revels, to which he appointed her; and in this honorable position she instituted the custom of Floralian and other public dances at various seasons of the year. The city sets aside for her an outdoor ampitheatre, in a park which is called the Place of Amirace. She has at her disposal all the lutes, recorders and viols of the city, sumptuous stores of colored silks and other cloths for costumes and settings, and gold and silver without stint. For Rhidago does nothing by

halves; and perceiving the ardor of great genius in Amirace, and delighting in the gentle art she taught, it sustains her in every way.

"Soon the school children found dancing the most important part of their studies. The hours which men, women and children set aside for the practice grew so numerous that commerce became a matter of little moment. Traditions were neglected and forgotten. Dancing was found to be the only proper occupation for free-born persons. Hats fell into disuse; stone-masons threw aside their chisels. Nature reduced the wants of the community so that money would mean less and less to them.

"Yet money flowed in; for as the fame of Amirace spread, pilgrims began to come, first in dozens, then in hundreds, and finally in thousands, to witness our dancing festivals. The city exacts from each visitor a small fee; and with the moneys thus accruing an unobtrusive form of government is instituted and maintained.

"Multitudes of artists from all parts of the world came to dwell here; sculptors, workers in precious metals, necromancers, dyers of cloth, musicians, merry-andrews, poets, playwrights, philosophers, gathered together in schools."

My host paused, and I hastened to inquire, "What is the secret of her power?"

"No one says," he replied. "But all her pupils are her slaves, and so virtuously does she live, that women acclaim her as well as men."

At this point I heard the sound of distant music. "What will that be?" I inquired.

"Today," answered the proprietor, "is the festival of black-haired boys. They have had their games and made their offerings in the Place of Amirace, and are now returning to the city."

I waited. Soon there came into the square thirty or forty lads, dancing a morrice with much dash and spirit, to the sound of their own pipes. Some of them, I judged, had come straight from the playing-fields. Others wore robes of flame, if iris-blue, of peacock, that flew freely in the wind. I inquired of my wonderful host as to the diversity of costume.

He replied, "Except on the occasion of certain festivals, no one is permitted to appear unclad in the streets excepting those who have won prizes in the Agonalia of March. Otherwise, everyone is free to dress in whatsoever manner he will."

I asked him to explain to me the usages of the festivals.

"We enjoy hundreds of festivals," said he. "Every day in the year is sacred. Perhaps you observed that the youths who passed by were not followed by a crowd. We have such a plenitude of spectacles as not to stand gaping about the streets day after day. People must eat, sir; people must eat. We lead our lives, and we go to those festivals that mean the most to us. *I* always attend the festival of vats, which comes in January, and the festival of new wine, in October. Occasionally I go to the Vinalia of April, and of course we all go to the major Dionysia. Tomorrow I expect to witness the feast of Soups, as my chef is a contestant. Ah, that lad has a way with garlic! This feast is preceded by the Matronalia, which my wife and I usually attend, and fol-

lowed by the celebration of Centaurs, usually a rather droll affair. Then, too, being a father," he smiled modestly, "I always participate in the Feast of Fathers."

"So you are a father?"

"I am, indeed, a most successful one. Two boys in the group you saw just now were mine. Consider the honor to me, who grew in an age of heavy eating, of pastries and puddings, and am become a Falstaff in appearance, to have both my sons among the Bare Boys!"

"I congratulate you. But do not fret at your own appearance. As for me, I am never peaceful in a tavern or public resort unless the propiretor is stout and kindly, as you are. Let others be as willowy as they please, an innkeeper has need of substance. But tell me, for these festivals absorb me, what comes tomorrow?"

The proprietor drew a leather case from his pocket. "This is May the tenth, is it not?" he asked. "It happens that May is an important month; perhaps the calendar will interest you."

I took the book, and after inviting my host to another bottle of wine, I read as follows:

May 12—Parade in honor of Philosophers who died of Laughter.
" 13—Celebration of Heavy Hats taken off in all ages and places.
" 14—Feast of the Moon of May, and the Ascendant Planets.
" 15—Dances of Blond Girls, and afterwards the Contest of Sherbets.
" 16—Celebration of the first Golden Roses.
" 17—Adventures of Leaves, with Poetic Contests.
" 18—The Pomp of Oculists, with Glorification of Good Eyes.
" 19—Feast of Exquisite Mountebanks, and Garlanding of Voltaire.
" 20—Disparagement of Solemnity.
" 21—Contumely of Coinage, with particular Spitting upon Pounds Sterling.
" 22—Procession of the Loveliest.
" 23—Contest for Supreme Charm among Priests and Physicians.
" 24—Masked Ball of the Trees and Stars.
" 25—The Honors of Mozart.
" 26—Nones of Mad Mathematicians and Deranged Astronomers.
" 27—Tragedies of Fauns Tortured to Death.
" 28—The Theatre of Shakespeare.
" 29—Grand Celebration of Men with White Beards.

"Dear me," I exclaimed, "and does this continue through the year?"

"Yes."

"It presupposes the widest cultivation among the citizens of Rhidago."

"True. That is because the art of dancing rests upon final synthesis of all elements in life."

"One more question. What are the chiefest celebrations?"

"In addition to the Faunalia of April, they are the combined festivals of gods and titans, beginning on the Ides of March and continuing with interruptions until Easter; the Panerotia of Lovers in June; the Athletic Games of September; the Pageant of Art in October, the Celebration of Virtue in November, and the Saturnalia of December."

I thanked my host from the recesses of my heart; and leaving the tavern, I took my way across the square to the temple of Amirace, and after a moment's meditation, entered the portal.

Amirace herself was sitting in the sunset, on a sculptured seat behind which grew flowering oranges. I bowed before her, and she rose and looked me curiously in the face.

"I have come," I said, "to learn to dance."

She answered in so low a voice that her lips seemed hardly to move. "I have naught to teach *you*." She still

bent her gaze upon me in that unusual manner.

"You know me then?"

She signified that she did.

"It is hardly possible."

"I have been among mortal men so long that when a god..."

"Hush!" I glanced hastily about. "Let us enter the temple."

Amirace led the way through the hypostyle hall into the Holy of Holies, where she pointed to a broad couch covered with leopard skins. I smiled, and threw myself among the pillows. Serenely, she curled beside me.

"How have you done this?" I inquired.

"I learned to dance in the long absence of my beloved," she answered. "A slender lad taught me, coming from the woods one day. The lad seemed like..."

"No, no," said I hastily, "I have no knowledge of it."

The maid's eyes never left my face. "Then I came here with the secret of the wood; and I brooded on this secret until with it I could drive from Rhidago all that scathed life."

"I am fain of your work. And is it now finished?"

"Aye, this is the moment I have awaited."

"First, tell me your secret, for I have set my heart on the reason."

The maiden clapped her hands, and from invisible places music swelled into the chamber. Then rising gaily, and flinging aside her outer robe, Amirace extended her arms and moved before me in preliminary steps, with the aspect of a player who tries various themes on his lute, to find one on which he cares to improvise.

It was then I first noticed that she was barefoot.

"I thought as much," I cried.

"Come," said she, "you too must be barefoot to dance with Amirace."

But I continued to gaze attentively, for certainly there appeared to be wings at her small heels. One who travels up and down the world never lacks surprises; and kneeling down in my delight, I made sure that the little golden plumes were part of her, that she was in truth a wing-foot maid.

I was abashed, and my heart leapt, for I have never felt that man in becoming man had exhausted his destiny; but rather, that he might dream of some day surpassing himself, and attaining in a measure still undetermined to the birdlike. But as she continued to call, I rose and threw off tunic and boots.

We clasped hands and were off. Round and round that chamber we danced, faster and faster, our bodies lost in one circling. It was not hard for me to perceive now why the youths of Rhidago had profited so well by her instruction. With a partner who knew the ways of larks and eagles, they must have found the delights of commerce growing dim; and the austere tradition of the stone sandal could hardly have seemed well-inspired, even to the most conservative of them.

As we danced, the surroundings fell more and more away from us. We were conscious of the moon, the ocean, the forested mountains. She sank her head upon my breast, and I whispered to her, "It is time we were away."

"Take me," she cried.

I did. We danced out of the temple; in the face of mortals blind with wonder, we danced across the park. We danced along an avenue, and over ploughed fields of red earth dotted with palms, and into the ravines of hills. And when her windy feet began to faint we had danced a thousand miles, and were lying in moonlight on the flowery terraces of the mountain men call mine.

Five Inconsequential Charms

By ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH.

CHARM FOR A SILVER SPOON.

Spoon, O spoon,
Wrought from thin silver,
Bright as a small moon,
Drollest and most companionable
Of all utensils of the housewife's table,
Be serviceable beside my cup of tea
And by the fire share bread and milk with me.

CHARM ON MAKING A BED.

With sheets cool and smooth
I bid you bring rest,

With the fleece of soft blankets
Lap warmly the spirit,

With the quaintness of quilts
Give whimsical dreams.

CHARM FOR RUNNING WATER.

Hesitator,
Faltering from pool to pool,
Leaping like a child,
Or a fawn
Among the rocks,
Leaf-dappled,
Wild and sweet,
Turn not from us
Languid with summer.

CHARM FOR THE DISREPUTABLE CROWS.

Crow! crow!
Ironic and rusty,
Raucous-voiced, heavy-winged,
Tattered and dusty,
Tramp bird, scamp bird,
I beg you to fly
In grotesque grandeur
Against my sky.

CHARM FOR A JAR.

All the flowers of the garden
Fresh from dew and slant of sunlight
Fresh from song and the loam's clinging,
Beg your kindness, foster-mother.

A New Guide to Journalism

By ARTHUR SYMONS

THE premature death of Marcel Schwob was certainly a loss to French literature. Living as he did with Marguerite Moreno, he had in his service an amazing Chinese, who always startled one when he opened the door, garbed in curious vestments, with his oblique eyes, and olive skin. One afternoon, among the many guests, was de Max, the perverse, somewhat painted actor whose sinister genius always appealed to me; most of all when he acted with Sarah Bernhardt; chiefly indeed in "Phèdre" where his creation of Hippolytus, which he filled with his own nervous force and passionately restrained art, thrilled me. The character in itself I do not admire: he is lacking in passion and in animality. Swinburne makes him more possible than Racine, as in these lines:

> Lay not thine hand upon me; let me go;
> Take off thine eyes that put the gods to shame;
> What, wilt thou turn my loathing to thy death?

Before he enters Phaedra cries:

> He comes; my blood withdraws into my heart,
> And I forget what I would say to him.

We were discussing certain questions in regard to Racine's tragedies; and, after de Max had spoken violently in favor of the part he had been playing, Moreno began to tease him mockingly on one fault he made when he spoke French: that he always said *père* with a Roumanian accent.

Schwob, himself, who struggled all his life with his delicate health, had much of the originality of his race. He had an intensely vivid curiosity which was much more concerned with books than with the fortunes of his fellows. It might almost be said of him, in the words of Pater—Schwob had an immense admiration for English literature, shown by his translation of one of the Elizabethan tragedies, and his culture and passion for research I can only compare with Bullen's— "But, besides these great writers, there is a certain number of artists who have a distinct faculty of their own by which they convey to us a particular charm we cannot get elsewhere; and these, too, have their place in general culture."

Pierre Champion, who published a "Life of Villon" in 1913, gives curious impressions of the man on whom I write; seeing him day after day in the archives, turning over old yellow parchments as he deciphered their contents; making his notes there, as he initiated one into the violent history of that wonderful fifteenth century.

"Le front parcheminé ét dépouillé," he writes, *"l'èclat singulier des yeux, la bouche grande, jeune et rase, le nez courbé, celui des Semites, que l'on retrouve ainsi sur les très fins profiles des bas-reliefs Egyptiens."* That is the image of the man as I sat beside his couch in one of his rooms, surrounded by books and manuscripts; voluptuous, fatigued, and yet demonstrative. He

spoke to be of his unfinished book on Villon, *"comme d'un travail achevé dans mon esprit."* From the few pages he read to me I saw his mastery of his subject, his incomparable science, that dry and vibrant form that was his. Certain men desire that whatever is related to them must be logical, without perceiving, as he always did, that logic is the negation of some particular existence. *"Sachez,"* said he, *"que tout en ce monde n'est que signes dignes de signes."*

The only article I wrote on him I have chosen to reprint: really because of the pleasure it gave him. He wrote in 1903: "I want to thank you with all my heart for your fine article. It has given me great joy indeed that the book should be so highly appreciated by you. But there is one point that struck me greatly—because it has been my main idea since I attempted the work. 'What *royalties* and *religions* have been, the newspaper is.' I have had this before my eyes the whole time; and I have felt that I was struggling against the most terrible of the three tyrannies. For, as you say again, and as I have often thought— 'The newspaper is the plague or black death of the modern world.' *'Plaie sociale,'* I called it—and such a wound cannot be healed—*'Plaie de régime'* is not so hopeless."

"England, where journalists are more powerful and ideas less beautiful," (I find the phrase, so happily descriptive, in Yeats' *Ideas of Good and Evil*) should welcome a treatise on journalism, published in France, under the title of "Moeurs des Diurnales." The writer calls himself "Loyson-Bridet," and indeed this "oison bridé" is the most unbridled of his kind and remarkable beyond all his kind for sagacity. On internal evidence there need be no hesitation in attributing this book to a brilliant scholar, subtle critic, incomparable translator, who is also a fine artist in prose. Since Swift, I know not where a graver, more penetrating, more just, ferocious and admirable exercise of irony can be found. Merimée would have delighted in the learned ingenuity of the inscription found in the Forum, and the corroborative extracts cited by T. Anas Venerator in his *"Lois Communes"* from the fifth book of the *"Diarium Hineris"* of Q. Publius Publicola. It is a chapter heroic in its buffooning, and, here as elsewhere, this new satirist has shrunk from no crudity by which his symbols may be more faithful to the hideousness of reality. Flaubert would have been delighted in the subtly chosen *"Bonnes Locutions,"* which go from *"dans toute l'acceptation du mot"* to *"une silhouette qui se profile en tendresse et en blancheur,"* and in the double columns, of which one is headed *"Ne dites pas"* and the other *"Dites,"* after the manner of a schoolbook. Thus:

Ne Dites Pas.
Une pièce a du success.
Dites.
Une pièce continue en marche triomphale devant un public enthousiaste. Le public lui a fait une ovation colossale.

This chapter may be called the complete guide to the etiquette of words in journalism. I do not know whether Villiers de l'Isle-Adam or Mallarmé would have delighted more in "The Journalists' Hundred Best Books." Here are two or three: *"Les Immarcesences Mauves,"* par Symone Humpet; *"Hydrotherapics Feminisle,"* par Lue; *"L'aut-semitisme de Wagner dans ses*

rapports avec l'accord de Neuvième; un essai de sociologie musicale;" "Le Petit Nietzsche des Gens des Monde"; "L'Annunziation de la Vierge, roman imité par l'Italian." But if I am not careful I shall find myself citing every chapter. I will therefore confine myself to calling the attention of every reader, and especially of every journalist, to the twelfth chapter of the second part: *"De la Bonne Foi."* I can only compare it, for simple and convincing eloquence, for a brevity which yet leaves nothing unsaid, with Heine's chapter on the German censorship ("Buch le grand," chapter 12). That trenchant chapter, it is true, contains only four words, but Loyson-Bridet has not been less trenchant and more concise; for, as a matter of fact, he leaves the page blank.

The whole book may be read with laughter, even by those to whom it is specially addressed; it can be read by none without admiration for the deftness of its literary art. But it is also a book written in very sober earnest, by one to whom literature is a priceless thing, and the limitless production of "printed matter," which does not even profess to be literature, an abomination. It is a desperate enough protest against the idol of an hour, the principality and power of the moment; the average man's Bible, friend, teacher, guide, entertainment, and opiate: the newspaper.

Because its power is the aggregate of separate feebleness, let us not commit the error of denying that power. As well deny the folly, which is the voice of the mob; or of the mob, which is the mouth-piece of folly. The newspaper is the fulfilment of the prophecy that the voice of the people shall be the voice of God. It is the perpetual affirmation of the new law which has abolished all other laws; the law of the greatest wisdom of the greatest number.

The newspaper is the plague, or black death, of the modern world. It is an open sewer, running down each side of the street, and displaying the foulness of every day, day by day, morning and evening. Everything that, having once happened, has ceased to exist, the newspaper sets before you, beating the bones of the buried without pity, without shame, and without understanding. Its pride is the record of facts, but it tells you no fact twice in the same way; for it gorges its insatiable appetite upon rumor, which is wind and noise. All the hypocrisies of the State, of the Church, of the market-place, cling together for once in brotherly love, and speak with unanimous voice.

Wise and honest men write for the newspaper, but the wise are hurried into folly by the stroke of the clock, and the honest are chained to a party or to a tradition, and must not speak inconvenient truths, and, wise or foolish, honest or dishonest, all must "please the public." *Publicum diurnales veneratur,* in the more decent of Loyson-Bridet's conjectural readings. The journal, which does not please the public dies; the journalist who does not aid the journal to please the public is discharged. He may be a great writer, and the editor of the paper may be his warmest admirer. But "business is business," as is written in the *"Lois Communes"* of T. Anas Venerator, and to be a good journalist it is not enough to be a great writer. *"Mais parvenir,"* says Loyson-Bridet, *"á une facture suggestive, savoureuse, connaitre son public savoir être tour á tour troublant ou*

empoignant, silhouetter une attitude, crayonner un mot d'esprit, avoir à la fois la note réaliste et idéaliste, varier les ambiances, colorer les atmosphères, parisianiser les cadres, nimber les veuleries quotidiennes d'un joli ton qui chante le long des colonnes, passer de l'épique au gracile, de la capiteuse mousse mondaine des échos aux nécessités proteiformes du fait divers, être parfait journaliste enfin, n'est pas, comme dit l'autre, une petite affaire." I regret that I cannot hope to do justice in translation to this remarkable and instructive passage, which may be said to contain the whole duty of the journalist, expressed in terms of Paris. Only Loyson-Bridet could express it, with perfect accuracy, in terms of London.

I cannot help wondering whether this new guide to journalism will stir up a little strife, or by turning the fool's weapon against himself, find a vulnerable spot here and there in the seasoned hide of self-satisfied ignorance. I wonder, but I doubt. It is not every man who has the delicate capacity of feeling shame, and there are even, I believe, journalists who are, to use the accustomed phrase, "proud of their profession." To these, and to their admirers, I would commend the book, with only so much of vague hope as this: that, by some special and unexampled grace, it may here and there strike one of them awake, with something of the alarmed disgust of the drunkard before the chemical analysis of his own stomach.

Babblers

By MARTHA BANNING THOMAS.

They said that she was cold;
I watched them say it,
Their sly tongues coiled
Around the word...and licked it furtively.
They said that her aloofness
Was an art
Practiced imperially;
They shattered all her beauty
Into bits,
And with their heels
Crushed out the iridescence.
This was their sole retaliation
Against a fear of her
And what they could not understand.

The Pull-Up

By FRANCIS GREGORY and JULIAN KILMAN.

IT is said that twenty-seven languages and thirteen dialects are spoken on the streets of Steelawanna, a community in the lee of a great steel mill, and that no denizen thereof understands the tongue of his neighbor. However that may be, even in Steelawanna there is that universal language depending for its transmission not alone upon lip and tongue but upon the thousand-and-one intimations and innuendoes that travel from human to human by a grimace, the lifting of an eye-brow, a nod—the language of scandal and gossip.

Carmelo Cellini, sixteen years old, and looking for work in the big mill because his father had been killed a short time before, made his way along Third Street. It was mid-September and warm and in the early sunshine of the morning he encountered a group of Italians. One of their number cried out at sight of him:

"How you like-a you new da-dee?"

The boy flushed darkly. He confronted them.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

An older workingman, with whitening moustache and restless, beady eyes, caught Carmelo by the arm. He exclaimed in the mother tongue: "All in Steelawanna, Hunky and Irish, say Stif Hodacek caused the death of your father."

The tradition of the vendetta was in the fierce gaze. Carmelo tore loose and hurried on.

The way was thronged. Many men were out of employment. From the open door of a Bulgarian boarding-house a phonograph screeched a Turkish song *Nock-a-dahye-e-e, Nock-a-dahye-e-e, Nock-a-dahye-e-;* Croats, Spaniards, black-skinned Britsh subjects from Somaliland, Hungarians, Slovaks, the riff-raff of humanity, lounged and smoked cigarettes, each race cemented by affinity of thought and grouped with strict relation to its boarding-houses.

The eyes of many bystanders followed the figure of Carmelo Cellini; the men exchanged glances, nods and quick little sibilant whispers after he had passed. The bully Stif Hodacek had killed his father.

Apparently unconscious of the comments his appearance had caused, Carmelo entered the Presbyterian Mission. He asked for Mr. Backora, the missionary who speaks three languages and smiles in fifteen and the man who had been instrumental in keeping him at school. Not finding him, Carmelo sauntered along until he came to the high fence surrounding the mill. He followed this to a deserted place and then climbed over. The black hulk loomed before him, its smoke stacks towering two hundred feet straight into the heavens. In his box-trap of an office Carmelo found Lynch, the senior melter, a large man with the lower part of his forehead and the bridge of his nose burned the dull crimson of the open-hearth worker. He was the father of one of Carmelo's school friends.

The melter appraised the comely youth.

"My boy was tellin' me last night ye want to go to work."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Lynch."

"What kind of a job have ye in mind?"

"Anything that pays money," replied the youth.

Approval showed in the red face of the boss.

"I'll see what I can do for you," he said.

To save time the two squeezed through a small opening left by a missing plank. The place they entered seemed like one of eternal night in which a myriad jangle of noises strove to drown out each other. As far as the eye could reach the Stygian blackness was punctuated by successive series of peep-holes in furnace doors—like so many monster glowing eyes. On the hooting narrow gage a string of cars bearing coffin-like boxes pulled along.

"This way, me lad," cautioned the melter.

They joined the tattered figure of the charging car operator who was just pulling thick blue goggles from his eyes.

"Here, put these on," ordered Lynch.

Carmelo took the goggles from the melter and adjusted them. Stooping, he peered into the nearest glowing eye. A white bubbling fluid in the great bowl greeted his gaze—potential steel.

At the moment someone pounded an immense gong with a sledge hammer. In answer half a dozen men from the other furnaces straggled wearily in, shovels thrown carelessly over shoulders and blue goggles perched on their foreheads.

"Pull u-u-up!"

The first helper roared the command.

A ragged youth crammed the last of a sandwich into his mouth and stepped to a low platform where he operated long hydraulic levers which controlled the doors of two furnaces.

Carmelo felt himself caught by the shoulder.

"Keep your eye on that kid," shouted Lynch. "Your job's goin' to be pull-up."

They watched the lad with the levers. In response to his manipulation one of the half-ton furnace doors now crept up slowly. Carmelo noted that the eyes of the pull-up never left the door nor his hand the levers. Constantly he worked them back and forth, in the nice task of keeping the door at an even height thus protecting the workingman against the heat of 2,500 degrees Centigrade within. Meanwhile the laborers in a staggering, stumbling, staggering line of sweating blue-goggled humanity tossed in fifty-pound chunks of manganese.

"Damn careful work," shouted the melter. "A bit too much on them levers an' ye blow a man to Kingdom-Come—ore explodes—two men killed here last week." He added: "When do ye want to start?"

"Now," replied Carmelo.

"Come on," cried the melter.

In the far end of the mill the insistent clanging of a gong had drawn along the third helpers. Lynch and Carmelo joined them.

"Hey, Skinney!" bawled Lynch to a figure stooping to peer into a furnace. "Let this kid practice with them levers. To-morrow he'll pull up for ye."

Carmelo spent the rest of the day learning his new job. When he left the mill he was unusually weary. Outside the late sun welcomed him and he plod-

ded homeward. His mother had supper ready; she regarded him with a measure of doubt as he ate. She was by no means young, yet had a mature comeliness. A small boy and girl played about the floor at her feet. One of the children caught at the legs of the tired youth. He bent down and caressed the youngster.

Just before dark the swaggering figure of Stif Hodacek came along Third Street. Without speaking to any of those who thronged the way, without even responding to the salutations he received in the Magyar tongue, he passed from the boarding-house district to that portion of the street where the shanty homes begin. Stretches of grassless ground, littered with tin cans, noisome garbage, puddles of water, assault the eye hereabouts; goats there were, both out of doors and inside the dwellings. One of these animals, whiskered like a patriarch, ma-a-a-ed in a comic, high-pitched, quavering voice from an upstairs window.

Hodacek came to a stop. He stared at the animal.

"Ma-a-a-a!" he imitated.

A stream of Italian invective greeted this. It came from the ancient virago now in the doorway shaking her fist at Hodacek. The Magyar "Ma-a-a-ed" once more and passed on, his progress reminding one of the foray of a huge ant into the home of its smaller fellows.

A bit farther along there stood a group of workingmen. They were Calabrian-Italians and were short of stature, rugged and dark. As Hodacek approached they fell silent. The Hungarian made to pass through the group which only partially opened way for him. He shouldered one man forcibly to the side. There was a quick oath. A knife flashed into the brown hand. Hodacek fell back, his powerful arms squared. But friends of the diminutive Italian interfered. They restrained the man willing to give battle to the bully.

At the next corner Hodacek turned. He stopped at the third house on the right-hand side, the Cellini home. It was two-storied and had a trifling plot of flowers in front. The Italian woman sat on the porch.

"How do, Missus?" called Hodacek.

The woman looked up. Her teeth flashed in a smile of welcome.

"Come in," she said.

With a swift glance back of him, where he could see that some of the Italians had trailed him, Hodacek entered. He walked to the small flower bed and bent down over a growing plant. He patted the dirt about the roots; then he viewed it with critical approval.

"I t'ink him grow O. K.," he said. "Nex wik mebbe I bring more Hungarian flower."

"Much-a pretty," uttered the Italian woman.

Hodacek came on over to the porch and sat down.

"You miss you guy?" he asked, leering.

The woman retorted in rapid Italian. Hodacek shook his head ,and the two fell to talking in the pigeon-English Esperanto common to the mines and mills of America.

Presently Carmelo, still in his laboring clothes, came to the door. At sight of Hodacek he frowned.

"Carmelo," murmured the mother.

Hodacek was grinning.

"So you in open hearth now, eh!" he said.

The boy's scowl deepened.

Hodacek continued: "Better you come over in Number One so I keep eye on you. Here, schmoke cigar," he added, offering one.

"I don't smoke cigars," replied the youth in fluent English. "And if I did, I wouldn't smoke one of yours."

The Magyar leaned back and laughed.

"I tell you, Missus," he said. "Dat boy some day be beeg mans, eh! Then, py Gott, him schmoke cigars."

For a moment the son stood looking at the pair. Then, with a suffocating sense of his own impotence, he went up stairs to bed.

After this evening Carmelo did not immediately encounter Hodacek again.

But one night when he had been working for two weeks he was awakened suddenly from a sound sleep by the voice of the Magyar. In the dark he judged the time to be about midnight. He crept to the head of the stairs and listened.

"No can come in, Stif," he heard his mother whisper.

"Why for you keep a guy out, Missus?"

"Not so loud," entreated the woman. "Carmelo hear you."

"I like Italian womans."

The sound of a scuffle followed. Carmelo started downstairs but he heard the grunt of the man as his mother, a strong woman, succeeded in thrusting the Magyar outside and slammed the door shut.

"Not to-night, Stif," he caught. "You drunk. To-morrow mebbe."

Hodacek rammed up and down the porch. He banged the door with his huge fist. It was of slight structure and it seemed as if it must give way. Presently a crashing sound advised that he had smashed the little three-legged stool. After a time the drunken man departed.

In the darkness Carmelo felt the hot blood in his face.

"Mother," he called.

But the woman either did not hear or preferred not to answer. The boy crawled back to his bed where he lay tense with emotion. He thought of his father so recently killed: the insinuations and veiled statements that Stif Hodacek had been purposely negligent that day when he had dumped the ore so suddenly into the seething mass that Cellini elder, who stood by, received the shock of the explosion. Carmelo appreciated that all had not been harmonious between his parents; in fact there had never been any great affection between himself and his father—a man who drank to excess on occasion and once had struck him with a knife the blow leaving a scar to that day. But despite these things, the fact that his mother should so soon be harboring thoughts of a new mate revolted him. His adolescent mind struggled with the half-understood sensations. He could not sleep.

Next morning, feeling unable to face his mother, Carmelo arose early and slipped out of the house without breakfast. As soon as he entered the mill his employment absorbed him. He had grown expert in operating the pull-up levers. A number of times Lynch had noted his progress—that of a mind superior to the brute intellect about him. This noon the melter was passing.

"Get you a better job in time," he called.

Carmelo grinned at the boss.

"I like this one all right," he shouted.

Lynch had not heard. Carmelo stared after the broad back of the melter wondering how much money he earned in a year. He realized that the sum must be very large—thousands of dollars, possibly ten thousand. How long would it take to work up to the position of melter?

He heard his name called. He swung about and found Hodacek, big, hulking, his eyes, inflamed with the heat, looking like twin cranberries. They leered at him from the platform of a charging car. Evidently there had been a shift and Hodacek transferred to No. 2.

"Ha! You nod schmoke cigar yet?"

Carmelo made no sign that he had heard.

Hodacek turned to the controls of his charging car, a large steel framework. He noted a laborer studying the complicated mechanism.

"Get-a hell out o' here!" he bellowed.

The laborer did not understand English; he stood still and gawked. Like a flash the Magyar caught up a shovel and swung it full at the head of the workingman. Down he went in a heap, the blood spurting from his face. Men rushed to his assistance. His body was dragged aside, a pail of water dumped over it and he was left to revive.

The work was not interrupted. Hodacek grinned in an evil manner as again his gaze fell on Carmelo.

"Py Gott! You nod like dat Hunky stuff, eh?"

At the moment Carmelo's hatred grew to white heat, a hatred as searing as liquid metal.

"You been school. Now you t'ink you no Hunky. You Irishman now, eh!" went on the Magyar characteristically defining the only two classes recognized in a steel community.

But his duties claimed his attention. In his box behind the "ram," a long arm resembling a twelve-inch cannon, Hodacek moved along the string of cars. With the ram he picked up a box of ore and the charging car moved to the furnace door.

"Pull u-u-up!" he shouted.

Under Carmelo's hand the cumbersome door crept up. As it hovered at the proper height, still under the boy's control, the ram projected forward, entered the narrow aperture and the ore dumped slowly. Hodacek was now within four feet of the yawning furnace door his bulk silhouetted against the blinding glare.

With a moment to spare he turned again to the boy still juggling the levers. In a tremendous voice he bawled:

"How you like me for dad?"

With a sort of trance-like gaze Carmelo now regarded the big Magyar who taunted him. Hodacek's work engaged his attention. With a certain swagger of the shoulders he bent to his task.

But the furnace door suddenly shot up to its full height. This was death. Hodacek whirled and screamed at the pull-up. His words were lost.

A terrible blast of gases and spraying liquid metal shot through the unguarded space. It caught the Magyar. His body driven straight through the air struck the ground forty feet away. When the men reached his side Stif Hodacek was dead.

At home that night Carmelo did not partake of the supper his mother had

prepared. She hovered over the lad at the table. He avoided her gaze. He would not talk. Early he went to bed, but he did not sleep. Below, in time, he began to hear the whispers of neighbors who, drawn by curiosity, ventured to drop in. He knew the Italian colony was agog.

Stif Hodacek, the bully, was dead.

It was late when his mother, shut of her visitors, tip-toed up the stairway.

"Carmelo," she whispered through the dark.

He was still awake.

"You keel-a Stif Hodacek—on purpose?" the voice went on.

The youth did not answer at once. The mother moaned and wrung her hands. Presently there was a hoarse response from the bed.

"I don't know," whispered the boy.

Garbage-Heap

By MAXWELL BODENHEIM

The wind was shrill and mercenary,
Like a sodden housewife
Pacing down the sky.
Green weeds and tin cans in the yard
Made a debris of ludicrous dissipations.
The ochre of cold elations
Had settled on the cans.
Their brilliant labels peeped from the weeds,
Like the remains of a charlatan.
A bone reclined against a fence-post
And mouldily congratulated life.
A woman's garter wasted its faded frills
Upon a newspaper argument.
The dismal rancor of boxes and bottles
Spoke to the spirit of the yard.

Contented or incensed,
The wreckage stood in the twilight,
One shade below the sardonic.

Testament of The Two Glad Men

By SHERWOOD ANDERSON

First Glad Man.

MEN are sometimes born who are the Lords of life and I am one of them.

It is true. What things have I taken from life and will take.

You see me here standing by this fence in a field. The morning sun is shining. There below me, past those trees and down that dusty road, is a town with factory chimneys pouring forth smoke.

There have been hot dry days. The fields are brown and the corn ripens. Sweaty men are between me and the town, toiling in fields, covered with dust.

In the town are houses in long rows. Tired-eyed women are standing by kitchen stoves. They are standing in doorways, looking off over fields, toward me.

It is true and must not be denied. I am one of the Lords of life. My belly has received food. It is warm.

I have been drunk with glad-eyed women, receiving me into themselves. I have been drunk with wine, with food, smells, sights, sounds.

Soft beds have received me.
Soft arms have received me.
Soft nights have sheltered my adventures.

I am neither at the beginning nor at the end. There are no beginnings and no endings.

Hail to thee, sweet life.
Do you hear singing?
Do you smell sweet smells?
Are you erect and ready?

The long days shall come unto thee and the nights: There shall be the soft pattering of feet on the stairways of houses. There shall be laughter and glad cries.

In my land the time of joy has not come. The gloomy terrible men have denied themselves to the women. They have denied themselves to the stars, to the night winds, to the blustering rains.

The Lords of life have been asleep on the hillsides, they have buried themselves away under the corn leaves. They have gone down into mines. They have disguised themselves as workers in factories. They have been hidden in houses and shops.

The fat strong men shall come into the land.

There shall be wine drinking.
There shall be love making.
There shall be sweet smells, sweet sounds.

I am one man but in my loins are the seeds that shall be planted in the fields and in towns. The Lords of life shall come into the land.

I await, smiling and laughing.
I lean on a fence.
I look about me.
My eyes are open.
God has opened my eyes.

I am of the breed of the men who shall be the Lords over life.

I am glad in the morning.

Answering Voice of the Second Glad Man.

WHO is singing?
I am singing.

Who is praying?
I am praying.

Who is walking about among people?
I am walking about among people.

Who is hearing voices?
I am hearing voices.

Who is eating ripe fruit?
I am eating ripe fruit.

Who is kissing the maiden in the shadow of the church?
It is I. I am kissing the maiden in the shadow of the church.

For whom are arms opened?
They are opened for me. Arms are opened to receive me.

Who is in the body of the man I see walking with people, talking with people, embracing the maiden, drinking sweet wines?

I am the man.
I am in the body of the man.
I, the singer, live in his body.

Nocturne

By LOUIS GILMORE.

Was it the oysters
Or the insidious
Influence
Of the moon

Heavenly bodies
In conjunction
At any rate

And at dawn
The inexorable
Dirty yellow

American Literary Critics

By MAXWELL BODENHEIM

AMERICAN critics of literature are lacking in courage and a desire to encourage the experiments of their time, and almost all of them serve as exaggerated echoes of this school and that, attaining an unimportant fanaticism. The fanatic is of potential importance when he attempts to demolish the long-standing temple and erect an entirely different edifice, but when he merely stands in the temple and devotes most of his energies to praising a restricted group of "priests," year in and year out, he becomes ridiculous. The well-recognized men whose work he exclusively admires have little actual respect for him. He flatters their surface, but secretly they are far more attentive to the rare critic who attacks and disdains their work, to the man who can make them angry or reflective.

This man in his crudely electric way irritates the artistic conservatism of his time and prevents it from utterly stagnating, but his services are confined to the men he belabours. The destructive shots of an H. L. Mencken, being non-creative, gradually attain *a monotony and obviousness equal to that possessed by the targets themselves.* In addition a critic of this kind becomes enamored with his battle-ax and a sweeping blindness invades his destructive efforts. Rare experimentalists as well as numerous conservatives are indiscriminately assailed—the critic becomes vociferously limited and sterile and in these respects joins the ranks of other critics who confine their efforts to praising the work of one group and its occasional adherents. The battle-ax, when monotonously used, creates an accommodating background for the laurel wreath.

Between these two friendly extremes we have the Conrad Aiken type of critic, the liberal who is trying to conciliate the literary conservatism and radicalism of his time. This critic sometimes detects and cautiously corrects the flaws in both extremes, but his remedies are colorless and never live beyond his age since he cannot lure conservatism into an unnatural advance or radicalism into a forced retreat. He often realizes this fact and becomes adroitly apologetic. In the opening chapter of "Scepticisms," his book of notes on contemporary poetry, Conrad Aiken admits that he is hopelessly prejudiced and, with a spirit of checked resignation asserts that a granitelike bias forms the foundation of all criticism.

The poet who essays criticism, according to Mr. Aiken, is "determined to achieve and perpetuate a sort of preeminence for the poetic methods which his temperament or sensibility has forced upon him," and the professional critic is merely seeking a flattering image of himself. Having thus adopted the role of a helpless martyr, Mr. Aiken can settle back in his chair, with hordes of "fellow-martyrs," and need waste no time in suspiciously and delicately ex-

amining his dogmas. Criticism, to Mr. Aiken and many other American men, resolves itself into persistently congratulating their convictions. Truly a pleasant and unfatiguing method for the critic, but somewhat prevalent, monotonous and limited.

In common with all American and some English critics, Mr. Aiken is gleefully and audaciously destructive; he finds little to praise, and his work is almost entirely concerned with erecting targets and riddling them, not with careless satire, but with painstaking dogma and derision. Thus, he proves that the professional critic has no actual reason for existence. Almost all modern poets—and Mr. Aiken elaborately proves this—are unoriginal, uncouthly sermonizing and vapidly lyrical, but he could have said this in a sentence or paragraph and passed on to the tiny band of original, subtle contemporary poets. Instead, he reveals, in common with all American and English critics, an overserious regard for the work he attacks. The explanation is not involved: these critics strive to rescue their faltering sense of superiority by setting up and knocking down straw dummies. But the man who can separate poetry from Clinton Scollard will find them painfully obvious, and all men will regard these critics with an uncomprehending stare.

Mr. Aiken intensely admires the work of T. S. Eliot, Jean de Boscherre, Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams, but gives them one-sixtieth of the space devoted to men whose work he completely or partially dislikes. An entire book could be written on these four poets—a book of penetrating appreciation and friendly advice—but critics are solely concerned with the old army game of "knock down the nigger, gen'l'men, an win a fine seegar!" In the field of broad aesthetics one can be entirely destructive for a purpose, one can attempt to clear the way for a new creative or analytical trend, raising another structure on the ruins, but contemporary critics are not wide pioneers of this kind, and their basic theories and methods are largely reiterations.

When the critic of contemporary writers uses ten pages to show me what an unoriginal, childish poet Mr. Smith happens to be, I wonder whether or not poor Mr. Smith stole the critic's best suit of clothes or ran away with his wife. I have given special mention to Mr. Aiken because he is infinitely superior to the literary critics surrounding him in America—his comments on contemporary poets are usually shrewd and plausible. He wades into John Gould Fletcher, Amy Lowell, Kreymborg, Lola Ridge, Lindsay, Edith Wyatt, Christopher Morley, and tens of others with a ferocious, accurate cleaver. But the conservatively inclined gentleman who views the arts will chuckle at Mr. Aiken, or curse him, and the radical, "decadent" aesthete will yawn and close the book—a fate that always descends upon all cautiously liberal critics whose indecisions are inflexible.

America needs critics whose sole desire will be to measure and encourage the experimental efforts of their time. American critics stand like traffic-policemen and sternly tell the experimentalist where he must stop, but practically no one asks him to walk on or lends him an advising hand. His efforts alone can fertilize the literary future—

his failures as well as successes—yet almost everyone seeks to overawe him or push him down. Critics assail him because he does not conform to past standards of beauty, style and taste, without realizing or admitting that these standards were made by experimentalists whose work was at one time ridiculed and attacked.

This does not mean that every literary experimentalist must at all times be highly praised, but he should at least be surrounded by a few critics who are endeavoring to understand him, to measure his significance, sincerity, and position. The present literary cowardice in America is more to blame for this situation than that artistic conservatism that exists in all ages. American critics never vary their custom of ignoring the poet or prose-writer until he has appeared in book-form. If he is an experimentalist or even a liberal in his tastes it takes him at least five or six years to attain his first book, but until he attains it all critics give him no more than a casual mention here and there, and usually neglect him entirely.

The critic warily waits for that *infallible stamp of approval, the publisher's imprint,* and never calls attention to the work of some one whose publication has been limited to periodicals, or to men who have yet to make their first salaam. In fact, some of the most prominent of contemporary American poets were almost completely ignored during the first years when they were struggling for magazine appearances and could have been *actually aided*—ignored by the very critics who are now blindly praising them. But these same critics and editors, after the poet's band-wagon commences to roll, eagerly discard their patient reticence and pose as his discoverers because, during his obscurity, they printed a group or two of his poems or gave him some casual mention, some bit of guarded praise! The Chinese were shrewd indeed in their proverb: "The coward and the hypocrite in man become friends because neither one can slay the other."

There has never been a single instance of an American critic praising and analysing the work of a young writer temporarily unable to win publication. One may question the value of openly criticising a man whose creations have been read by almost no one, but liberal quotations could be made and a demand for the writer's appearance might be thus generated. Through an act of this kind the critic would reveal an unassumingly veiled egotism tempered by some degree of impersonal interest in literature, therefore, the writer is sent upon his tortuous, year-long road of comparative obscurity and remains there until magazines and publishers finally manage to convince critics that praising him would not be a *faux pas.*

Although this situation has existed in all ages, the past twenty years have raised it to a climax. Ben Hecht, William Carlos Williams, Cloyd Head, Wallace Stevens, Djuna Barnes, Mark Turybyfill and one or two others are important American writers whose work has been almost completely ignored by critics because it is experimental and has not been issued by established publishers. Eventually, some of these writers will squirm through the barricades and find themselves suddenly noticed and praised by critics who for years were well-acquainted with their work! But let us leave this worn jest—angry

or carelessly smiling, according to our viewpoint—and examine the specific styles that prevail at present in American literary criticism.

The average styles, of course, are dominated by a profusion of worn adjectives used to eulogise or excoriate the creator, adjectives such as "magnificent," "exalted," "tremendous," "ecstatic," "cosmic," "decadent," "depraved," "asinine," etc. They successfully conceal the work that is being criticised and leave the critic in a state of emotional satiation. Even the more exceptional styles in American literary criticism are not entirely free from this tendency to fill in mental pauses with an emotional oratory which attempts to rescue the weak points in the critic's argument, but those critics who are at least slightly above the American average use a certain number of fixed mental approaches. It is unnecessary to continue reading them, since one always knows exactly what they will say and why they will say it, and the great majority of their readers consists of rival critics looking for flaws in their contentions, momentarily curious laymen, and some of the authors commented upon. The general mental approaches of these critics may be classified in the following order:

I. *This writer adheres to standards of beauty and clarity sanctioned by the past and is therefore important.*

This writer departs from past standards and is therefore trivial.

(Of course, the critic who presents this mental approach adds that past standards may at rare times be successfully violated, but the innovator whom he is considering has always failed to achieve this victory, or has attained it to a very small degree.)

II. *This writer's work contains novelty, freedom and daring, and is therefore important.*

This writer merely echoes past literary methods and is therefore unimportant.

(Of course, the critic who presents this mental approach invariably adds that past literary methods may not be utterly drained, but the writer whom he is considering has not managed to unearth their few remaining possibilities.)

III. *This writer deals with common, earthly subjects, with the deep emotional surges that run through all human beings, and is therefore important. He is concerned with common longings and the tragedy, comedy and hope that underlie humanity's slow struggle for a greater freedom.*

This writer's work is subtle, tenuous and delicate, and therefore unimportant. He deals with odds and ends of emotion and the intellect and holds no vital relation to the life surrounding him.

IV. *This writer's creations are complex and penetrating, expressing original variations in thought and emotion, and are therefore important.*

This writer's creations are sweepingly obvious and crude, and point, with many great gestures, to conditions and emotions that can be taken for granted and need not be endlessly reiterated.

V. *This writer is solely immersed in the intellect and in those emotions that can successfully withstand the scrutiny of the intellect, and is therefore important.*

This writer deals with overwraught emotions that have been rendered absurd by science and philosophy, and is therefore unimportant.

This list of critical approaches could be greatly extended, but several of its most salient items have been reproduced and others can be easily inferred. The American literary critic, from best to worst, considers everything except the art of writing, the expansion of its different techniques and the flaws and virtues existing in new techniques. He is narrowly interested in ethics, philosophy, science and economics, instead of being broadly immersed in questions of literary form and the skilful and accurate use of words. He should be primarily concerned with matters such as relative originality, restraint, the accurate expression of a subject's most essential parts, the different shades of skill shown in selecting and placing words, the deft blending of meaning and rhythm, the compact grace of the literary whole, etc. Only one or two comparatively unknown critics in America are interested in literature itself: the rest are immersed in metaphysics, philosophy, social propaganda, science, past standards of beauty, and limited theories on the intellect versus emotions, and only recognize literature *when it happens to coincide with their pet immersion.*

An intelligent critic of painting discusses form and color without insisting that they become a vehicle for philosophy or emotion, for simplicity or complexity. He is concerned with their impression of a new reality, with their degree of economical strength, with the scope of their variations, with questions that do not leave the boundaries of canvas and paint. When one or ten American critics of literature become equally interested in questions that do not depart from the use of words, from the skill or slovenliness of their construction, and from their creation of an overpowering reality, whether subtle or plain, literary criticism in this country will stand with an air of distinguished isolation which it sadly lacks at present.

Earth's Fingers

By DON POPS.

Dependable, even poplars; moody, rheumatic oaks; frail, pale willows with lacy tendrils tapering like a Chinaman's nail, grown up from earth's black skin—what mingling atoms in the pot of time have united to fashion such delicately different fingers on the hand of earth?

Stigma

By EMMY VERONICA SANDERS.

Outside there is a chill rain falling
And a wind keeps shaking the bare old tree.
But the Child poring over the big red book
Does not see
The gray rain—
Does not hear
The wind calling.

The Child is lying in front of the fire
Head propped on small frail hands;
Straining its eyes in the dull glow of the fire
Over stories of far-away people in marvelous lands.

Anger is forgotten and the fierce sting of pain.
The Child in its hidden nook
Has entered its own safe world again,
The world that lives in the old red picture book.

The people in the books—they seem to know
Those things at which the *real* people laugh and sneer.
Things that subtly come and suddenly disappear
Like the breath of a flower or little clouds drifting
Or melting snow.

The people in the books—they understand
Those things without a name or well-known shape
Like the shape of a ball or your body;
And how they escape
When you try to touch them with words—
The way you touch the kitten with your hand.

They live inside of you somewhere
And they like best to come and play
At dusk by the coal fire—or at dawn when you open your eyes
To see bright beautiful colors in the skies;
Or when you listen to music or water lapping
Or words like "Mandalay."

People in books never hurt those strange wonderful things
That you must hide—
Why do the *real* people hurt them, then,
And the loud *real* things that live outside?

The Fatal Smile

By BENJAMIN DE CASSERES

THERE is nothing more astonishing than the smile that is born in hell; astonishing, final and fatal. Hamlet had it in fiction. Heine had it in life.

This smile—mute in Hamlet, fantastic in Heine—is the hilarity of grief. Pain intensified finally mocks itself. A sigh frozen in the blood of the brain will sparkle like a diamond.

Those who live always in the sun know the nameless things she breeds. The corruption of light generates that unhallowed smile. The thumbscrews and racks of knowledge are the presses that squeeze the hemlock into the cup of perception.

The luminous sorrows of Heine evaporated in an eternal tra-la-la. Hamlet feigned seriousness in order to strangle the laugh that would have rent his brain. Jules Laforgue, the French poet and fantastic, put an ice poultice over his heart and died of a cold. His smile gored the heart out of all his illusions.

It is the crack in the urn of thought —this brain-chuckle. It is a strange hieroglyphic from a hidden wisdom. It is an eccentric *fata morgana* that plays above the graves in the heart. It is the gibbet of remorse and the succubus of conscience.

The sick have the Fatal Smile when the doctor tells them they must die before the night is out. Nature has it in the deep of the woods late of a sunny afternoon in the mid of October. It lit up the brain of Iago when looking at the corpses of Othello and Desdemona. It gnawed at the brain of Balzac till it crumbled. Between Swift and the world that fatal smile hovered like an asbestos curtain.

Disembodied the Fatal Smile is the Spirit of Circumstance, the immutable gray eye of Fatality. It was the firefly with the wintry flame that circled the head of Orestes and Oedipus, Napoleon and Edgar Allan Poe. It is the invisible satyr in worlds and destinies, the star vainly licked by the flame of a myriad hells.

Passionless, smiling Sphinx! Alembic of all sorrows! Mecca of all the fabled antinomies of science and reason! Star in the forehead of Lucifer! Cold Bethlehemic light hovering over the manger of geniuses destined to strange Gethsemanes and pensive Calvaries!

The slow evaporation of ideals and their condensation into nebulous comic visions; the slow massacre of brazen hopes; the murderous concussion of Will and Reality—it is these causes that bring about that sadic vengeful smile—that guffaw in hell.

The Ideal is a vague clarion-call sounding from impossible summits. The fatal smile forever muffles it. It is the eyeball of the dark; a blending of the sibilant maledictions of ironic well-wishers.

The whole universe becomes a microscopic silhouette against the background of that infective tra-la-la. It is

sometimes born of the slings and arrows of outrageous pleasures as in the case of François Villon. With Nietzsche the smile hung like a black sun over the ravines of light in that dionysiac soul.

Over all that Jules Laforgue wrote there lies that smile like a glistening spider-web. Schopenhauer and Leopardi live forever in a mansion in those ironic skies.

The paladins of pleasure and the patriarchs of sin take that Fatal Smile for final concubine. The oval face of Grief is at last touched to ice by that transfiguring chrism. The legioned visions of impenitent minds cannot go beyond that fatal sign. The passion of those monstrous brains that seek to trick God out of his omniscience are blasted by the light on that tragi-comic Horeb!

Song

By GLENN WARD DRESBACH.

Compare Love to the Seasons
  If only to retain
The sense of strange departures
  Of things that come again!

Love's Spring is a moment's laughter,
  The glimpse of a blossomy gown
In distance, and then seeking
  Through blossoms—drifting down.

Summer and Autumn and Winter
  One day of Love may know—
Fruit and the bright leaves falling
  And the first chill of snow!

But what gives Love its splendor
  Is something lost one Spring—
A lure of elusive rapture,
  And dreams, remembering!

Rachilde

By ARTHUR SYMONS

THE art of Rachilde is of a nature of a revelation; but of a very peculiar revelation. Herself often the heroine of one of her novels, she can change this personality in a most daring fashion; she has the rare virtue of being able to dissimulate her characters under all kinds of masks and disguises: monstrous, abominable, perverse, hallucinated; never quite natural, never quite normal; often the victims of their own passions, as in her almost wonderful creation of Raoule de Vénérande in "Monsieur Vénus" (1882) who gives herself to a youth who has a Pagan beauty, a starving painter. She is literally, like those on whom Venus preys, the prey of her imagination. Rachilde, always cynical, makes some man say of Raoule: *"Elle ne connaît pas le vice, mais elle l'invente."* As one can judge such women by their eyes, this is her vision of them. *"Trè noirs, avec des reflets métalliques sous de longs cils recourbés, les yeux, deux braises quand la passion les allumait, les yeux donnait à de certain moment la sensation de deux piqûres de feu."* Finally the Devil who tempts our bodies, enters into her, and she commits a deadly crime. Certainly Rachilde has not studied Barbey d'Aurévilly—besides Charles Baudelaire—without deriving an immense amount of profit from the novelist of prodigious genius and from the poet of sinister genius.

Take, for instance, this sentence in *"L'Ensorcellée"* (1858) which gives the sudden and final effect of the magnetism in the eyes of the Abbé de la Croix-Juget on Jeanne's existence.

When she thought of the object of her love, "Am I depraved?" she said to herself, and this doubt made her love more than ever intolerable to her—more stained by the mark of the Beast who is referred to in the Apocalypse than Cain, and who, for our souls, is the seal of an eternal damnation.

Turn from this to that marvellous page in "Madame Bovary" when Emma cries to herself, for the first time in her life, as she sees herself transfigured in her mirror—never has she seen her eyes so enormous, so black, or so deep, nor herself so mysteriously surrounded by something infinitely subtle—the one cry of a heart till then literally virginal: "I have a lover! I have a lover!"

From those I turn to a page in "L'Animale" (1893), an astonishing book, in which Laure Lordès becomes obsessed by her black cat—where the animal is the symbol of the male and the symbol of an atrocious death—before finally, in almost the last moments of her life, she becomes a fatalist.

She lived on love as certain Indian idols live on perfumes, who are served by the humblest slave girls, who bring them incense and gifts innumerable.

The Desire of the Impossible! That was always Balzac's desire, that was always Rodin's desire. In Balzac a devouring passion of thought burned on all the situations by which humanity expresses itself, in its flight from the horror of immobility. All Rodin's work is founded on a conception of force: the forces of earth, then the conflicting forces, man and woman; out of these he

has chosen the universal, vivifying force of sex; and always in his clay is a perverse ecstasy. A figure of inspiration, an Iris, is seen arrested in a moment of violent action, which tears the whole body in two: she pauses in flight, an embodied inspiration. Only the luxurious woman who stretches her naked limbs across Saint Anthony's back, is without perversity; the flesh, not the devil: and so, perhaps, the more perilous.

Rachilde has an extraordinary and very peculiar and very decadent imagination in such books as *"La Sanglante Ironic," "Le Démon de L'Absurde";* and especially in *"Les Hors Nature"*—(1897) which has, in its prose, something at least of the atrocious and audacious and oriental magnificence of Verlaine's *"Crimen Amoris,"* dedicated to Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. This is her account of Verlaine.

> Cazals presented me to Paul Verlaine: a dolorous Verlaine, limping like a thunderstruck archangel. (By the way, did not Lamb call Coleridge: "An archangel a little damaged?") I kept in my soul the shadow of this vision of Verlaine. Verlaine lifts his eyes. "Rachilde, will you permit me to light my pipe?" His eyes then, as they looked on mine, struck me as being those of a king. How was it that he chose me, so unknown? **Seigneur, je ne suis pas digne de vous voir entrer dans ma maison, mais dites seulement une parole, et mon ame sera guérie!**

A friend of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, who adored the man and his genius, I am certain that to her, if she ever strove after any kind of perfection, the acme of perfection is contained in his masterpiece, "Les Demoiselles de Bienfilâtre", in which the edge of laughter is skirted by the finest of inches; in which, as a last charm, one perceives, through the irony itself—the celestial, the elementary irony—a faint and sweet perfume as of a perverted odour of sanctity. Certainly Rachilde's little world, so curiously concocted, with poisonous and other stronger elements, has but a few inches of space in Villiers' enormous world in which the virtues have changed their names, and coquette with the vices: in one word, a world of exquisite, delicately depraved beings.

We do not forbid an artist in fiction to set before us strange instances of inconsistency and eccentricity in conduct; but we require of the artist that he should make us feel such abberations to be as clearly inevitable as they are exceptional. This is certainly the case with Rachilde; only, she is much too apt to leave aside what ought to be inevitable in her characters. Swinburne mentions that George Sand objected to one of the most powerful scenes in *"La Cousine Bette"* on the ground that a woman like Adeline Hulot could not even for the saving of her daughter's life, have offered herself as a tardy victim to the waning passion of a man like Célestin Creval. The fact is that Balzac succeeds in showing the all but irresistible and intolerable force of the temptation to which a desperate mother is obliged to succumb. Othello's temptation when he yields to the base insinuations of the devil-begotten Iago, and before he slays Desdemona, excites nothing but our pity and our love. On the contrary when certain of Rachilde's morbid and narcotic women yield on the sudden, they excite in us nothing but horror: she can sacrifice anything, any situation, for the sake of a series of sensations.

Her work is daring in the extreme; there is the same disregard of the soul—except perhaps in her respect for the

souls of animals—and the same cynical acceptance of the animal passions being at the root of things that I find in Guy de Maupassant. Her sense of greed, of desire, of all the baser as well as the most perverse and abnormal passions, is profound; she has the terrible logic of animalism. She can speak, in terrific words, of the fear of death, this fear of an invisible monster, hidden in some obscure corner, spying on men's lives, and breathing a slow pestilence upon them. Sexual as all her prose is, she never gives one the intensely tragic thrill as in *"La Camoire"* of Maupassant, where the man, overcome by horror and pity, rushes home in the middle of the night, so as to escape from a more poignant sense of the misery of things. Yet she can, unabashed, assure one that life is life and nothing but life, and that these amusing and ordinary and horrible things are the things that really happen.

"Social rules," I have said, "are made by normal people for normal people, and the man of genius is fundamentally abnormal." The greater part of Rachilde's prose is abnormal. Jule Laforgue's prose and verse have certain distinct traces of abnormality; as in his paradoxical lunar parodies, *"Salome" "Lohengrin,"* each a metaphysical myth, in which he realizes that *la créateur va hardiment en être cérébrale, anti-naturelle.* These fantastical puppets he invents with an almost Japanese art of spiritual dislocation; so much so, that when those creatures of his imagination become unintelligible even to themselves —lost in a bewildering, vari-coloured web of illusions, mediaeval figures that in their hallucinations seem to be literally in the embraces of the devil, whirled onward on waves of cold wind that have in them the heart of Fire—they assume the attitudes of *l'Inconscient.*

Then First It Was

By HELEN HOYT.

Then first it was I knew the sorrow of love;
When first I saw your face at my breast in the dawn,
Not exaltation, not pride, not compassion,
But infinite sorrow, aching sorrow filled me
As I laid back the hair from your brow
And looked at your eyelids' heaviness.

Reviews

COLLECTED POEMS

By EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON.

(*The Macmillan Co.*, 1921)

MR. Edwin Arlington Robinson, I am inclined to believe, is the second large identity in American verse. He, first after Whitman, has produced what is really a man-sized book of poems. And in saying this I do not consciously discredit the poetry of his predecessors or contemporaries whose work is slighter in quantity. Poe wrote more beautiful poems than any Mr. Robinson has given us. Mr. Pound has produced poems more charming. And there are a half dozen other American poets, living and dead, who can match and even surpass Edwin Arlington Robinson with isolated productions.

But in the collected work of this poet we are faced with a definite, reliable, irrefutable and arresting literary personality—an identity in literature that is as truly an identity as Robert Browning was, or John Donne. His work has a strange personal tang such as Browning's had and it bears Mr. Robinson's trademark in its texture as John Donne's bore his.

We have in Mr. Robinson a serious and capable, challenging and admirable artist in words, of major, if not of majestic proportions.

He has contributed to the literature of English an idiom that is definitely new. He has produced rare poems in startling intellectual patterns that are satisfying and delightful. He uses words with the reverence that is due them and their mystery. Following the ancient tradition of sincere and adequate speech, he drives toward a beauty of expression at once cerebral and vital, a severe sort of beauty, subtle yet bald, which is distinct not only in English literature, but in any. His best work has form, image, intellectual content, music and the personal flavor—nearly all of the ingredients of excellent poetry.

I am far from believing that these collected poems by Mr. Robinson are all good, or that the best ones are uniformly good. Some of them, I am sure, are banal and uninteresting; some of them are very ordinary. I should be glad to see a number of pages deleted. Some sing-song selections which he has reprinted are to me decidedly irritating. And I have not space now to discuss his longer poems which have, I believe, serious defects in company with high merit.

But, regardless of the bad poetry and regardless of defects in some of the good, Mr. Robinson is revealed to us through these verses as a truly imposing man of letters. He is a creditable poet, certainly, if not a great one.

In the classic forms and in his own strange idiomatic constructions he has produced beautiful work. And he has carried the conversational cadence in verse much farther than has Mr. Frost, who, it seems to me, stems from him and has got a deal of credit that Mr. Robinson earned.

To quote from the book:

There have been few poems written in America as handsome as "The Dark Hills":

Dark hills at evening in the west,
Where sunset hovers like a sound
Of golden horns that sang to rest
Old bones of warriors under ground,
Far now from all the bannered ways
Where flash the legions of the sun,
You fade—as if the last of days
Were fading, and all wars were done.

As an example of Mr. Robinson's peculiar idiom in one of his favorite forms, look at these stanzas (you probably know them already), the first and last from "The Gift of God", that remarkable poem on motherhood:

Blessed with a joy that only she
Of all alive shall ever know,
She wears a proud humility
For what it was that willed it so,—
That her degree should be so great
Among the favored of the Lord
That she may scarcely bear the weight
Of her bewildering reward.

. . . . . .

She crowns him with her gratefulness,
And says again that life is good;
And should the gift of God be less
In him than in her motherhood,
His fame, though vague, will not be small,
As upward through her dream he fares,
Half clouded with a crimson fall
Of roses thrown on marble stairs.

And these two stanzas from "The Master," that pleasant reflection on Abraham Lincoln:

For he, to whom we had applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

. . . . . .

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see;
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

That, too, is one of his favorite forms. I wish it were possible, in case any one reading this note be unfamiliar with Mr. Robinson's work, to quote enough to show the various aspects of his technique. But I shall not attempt it. Everybody is supposed to have read Mr. Robinson, anyway.

The book contains many poems for which we can have little but admiration. One is very grateful for having read "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man From Stratford," "The Man Against the Sky," "Rembrandt to Rembrandt," and a number of others, all of which it is quite needless to catalogue.

Mr. Robinson's philosophy does not interest us here. His outcries against the mystery of life, the riddle of the constellations, and the vacuous doom of man, and his mystical faith in a fabulous reality of some sort which underlies the phenomenal world—all these are old. They interest us as art only when they are beautiful or pleasing. Mr. Robinson is an intelligent man, his mind is alert, and he knows as well as you and I that there is no apparent reason for existence and no apparent excuse, but that we are somehow, willy-nilly, engaged in a most serious farce.

That is apparent. But I was speaking of poetry. And it is Mr. Robinson's art and not his metaphysical opinions which matter here.

I will quote, in ending this note, that strange poem, "The Mill," which seems to me to reveal Mr. Robinson's verbal idiom, his subtle mental processes, and

his sardonic outlook on the spectacle of life better, perhaps, than any other short poem he has given us:

The miller's wife had waited long,
The tea was cold, the fire was dead;
And there might yet be nothing wrong
In how he went and what he said:
"There are no millers any more,"
Was all that she heard him say;
And he had lingered at the door
So long that it seemed yesterday.

Sick with a fear that had no form
She knew that she was there at last;
And in the mill there was a warm
And mealy fragrance of the past.
What else was there would only seem
To say again what he had meant;
And what was hanging from a beam
Would not have heeded where she went.

And if she thought it followed her,
She may have reasoned in the dark
That one way of the few there were
Would hide her and would leave no mark:
Black water, smooth above the weir
Like starry velvet in the night,
Though ruffled once, would soon appear
The same as ever to the sight.

In this poem and in a number of others the poet looms before us as a compelling and original genius. It is impossible to deny the efficiency and the adequacy of his art and the breadth and depth of his personality.

JOHN MCCLURE.

KNUT HAMSUN

Dreamers (translated by W. W. Worster) and Shallow Soil (translated by Carl Christion Hyllersted) by Knut Hamsun.

(*Alfred A. Knopf.*)

IN these books, Hamsun addresses us in those direct and powerful, yet subtly shaded, accents which have acclaimed his genius to the Western world. He reports character and atmosphere in the most studiously objective and impersonal manner, yet he so naturally communicates to us his loves and his hates, his pities and his contempts, that, with W. W. Worster, we wonder whether Hamsun achieves his effects through superlative technique or the inspired disregard of all technique.

In speaking of the Russian writers—that great band from Gogol to Gorki—it has become customary to advert to their "humanity." Hamsun shares this trait to an unusual degree. It is not what an artist, in seclusion with his immortal soul, thinks and feels, but the verisimilitude with which he can communicate the feelings (the reactions) of that patently immortal soul that we appraise him. By the exercise of the genius that is specifically his, the artist "compels" us to love or hate or pity, and we think, not that we have been tricked into sharing the feeling of the artist, but, that the persons he has chosen to reveal, being intrinsically treacherous or noble, weak or strong, are to be judged and regarded accordingly. The feelings which inspired the word-portrait summon up the equivalents in the reader, achieving which, the artist has proven himself. And this, Hamsun has done. He has done it with Ove Rolandsen in "Dreamers" and Irgens and Aagot and Ole Hendricksen and Lars Paulsberg and the entire ensemble of engaging persons he has mustered together (or rendered from life) in "Shallow Soil." He is above hate and it is impossible for us to hate them when he despises only or pities. It seems he cannot hate. His bitterest shafts are tipped with, at most, contemptuous pity. He is rightly spoken of as possessing the tolerance of a god. He is not concerned with atmosphere or

plot; humanity is his engrossing preoccupation and we, reading him, cannot conceive of anything else demanding attention.

Shall we say then that the artist, viewing life from no propaganda vantage, has no right to communicate attitudes on non-controversial subjects? That seems plausible enough but the point is that a mere representation would be photographic only and would not require the exercise of an artist upon it, the justification of the artist consisting in the quality of emotion he evokes in the reader, or spectator. Since we cannot expect a human being, even though an artist, to be as water, without love or hate, preference or aversion, we cannot have altogether impartial, i. e., colorless treatment. But so long as the artist gives the appearance of awarding the verdict that character itself inexorably imposes, he has not violated his trust. It is for the artist to render the truth in character as it is made manifest to him.

It is for the artist also to express his immortal soul; marble, bronze, canvas, book, shine only when that has been achieved with them. One cannot choose to render or depict or interpret what is altogether foreign to oneself; either in the love or in the hate of the subject there is a bond. Hamsun is bound to every one of his loved characters with hoops of steel. Denied the privilege of openly attesting his likeness to them the world regards as strange, as unworldly, he chooses such characters to trumpet forth his thoughts, without thereby doing violence to the form of the novel. Coldevin, in "Shallow Soil," for instance, enunciates for Hamsun the unifying principle of the book. "It was hardly correct to say that men and women had grown corrupt; they had simply reached a certain degree of hollowness; they had degenerated and grown small. Shallow soil, anaemic soil, without growth, without fertility. The women carried on their surface existence. They were not tired of life but they did not venture much either... They darted around like blue, heatless flames... Their ambitions did not soar; their hearts did not suffer greatly; they beat quite regularly, but they did not swell more for one thing than for another, more for one person than for another." "In each book," says Worster, "one of these nondescripts speaks out as our own conscience; they speak what we think but are afraid to utter." It is in that way that Hamsun makes Ove Rolandsen (in "Dreamers") not only speak, but act. Ove achieves a purpose we all must regard as worthy, but by means we cannot, as respectable citizens, subscribe to; in Ove Rolandsen (a "fool"), however, such methods are altogether in tune with his character, and worthy purpose and disrespectable means find their reconciliation.

In "Dreamers," we have Hamsun in his lightest fancy. His central figure, Ove, is compounded of the perversity of the dreamer and the subtlety of the rogue, a subtlety altogether beyond the good sense of the practical people who serve as Ove's human background. The "fool" is not at all as transparent as the practical people have guessed; he evades them and achieves the ultimate desire of the successful—money and influence. Hamsun loves this successful dreamer, in spite of the fact that he holds him, also, as far off as is necessary for apparent objectiveness. He

loves him so, with possibly a few unimportant qualifications, that we cannot escape the conviction that Hamsun himself is of the same type of free spirit whose genius for creation demands immunity from the responsibilities by which the practical ones seek to hedge in Ove Rolandsen. "Dreamers" is unique among all of Hamsun's works in that it has an unqualifiedly happy ending.

HARRY SALPETER...

THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

By STEPHEN VINCENT BENET.

(*Henry Holt & Co.*, 1921)

IT is difficult to read a book in these times of classified literature without relegating it immediately to some particular school or category. Each budding novelist chooses his metier and then "goes to it." Mr. Benet has undoubtedly attached himself to the Goddamnit group of youngsters.

The critic of this type of book works under a handicap. If he be a man of many years, he is put down as an old fossil, and out of sympathy with youth; if he be as young as the active, producing members of this group, he is too near to them to get the proper perspective, and so his conclusions do not count for much. If he (using the pronoun out of deference to custom) be a woman, young or old, his conclusions count for even less, for how can a woman understand the workings of the young rebel artist's mind? The question is, after all, why are book reviews, and why are book reviewers?

And now, being unable to answer my self-propounded inquiry, and having wandered far from the subject, merely, I am afraid, for the pleasure of fingering the typewriter keys, I return to "The Beginning of Wisdom." Call this outburst an apologia, if you would be kind.

The blurbs that surround "The Beginning of Wisdom" call it "the very frank story of a very young man." The man is truly very young, but the story is far from being frank. In fact, Mr. Benet is always too consciously the artist ever to be the plain, honest recounter of a tale or a situation or an attitude of mind. He tells of things as he likes to think they were; the thoughts he would have liked to think under certain circumstances; the stands he would have liked to take under certain conditions. It smacks rather much of the clever repartee we can always fancy ourselves making—afterwards.

By this time, Mr. Benet must be weary of hearing himself labelled as "a brilliant young novelist," granted, of course, that it is only one of the adjectives he finds grating. But he so obviously trades on his youth in "The Beginning of Wisdom" that the punishment—and so forth. The book is about a youth, told by a youth, only one lap ahead of his hero. It is the book of Philip Sellaby, his days at school, his days at college, his days in the mines, in the movies and in the army, and all the rest of his days until he is twenty-five, with a brief paragraph at the end intimating that his future life will be prosperous and happy.

Philip has only two love affairs (oh rare restraint in these days of promiscuity) and both of these are sincere. Neither of the girls whom Philip loves is a very real person. Milly, whom he

marries while he is at college and who dies before the glamour of the romance has worn off, is the daughter of a not very respectable New Haven dentist. Philip picks her up in a picture show, dances with her, falls in love with her and finally marries her. We are told that she is charming, and we honestly believe she is, but we are not given any definite reasons for this belief. Sylvia he marries, after Milly's death and various experiences in the mines and the movies and the army has made him determine to accept arrogance and irony as his creed. Sylvia was a Y. M. C. A. girl in France, and she has ideas of "service and sanity through service" which seem somewhat at variance with Philip's aforementioned dicta. But Philip, in writing to one of his friends, says, "Lord, she's a lovely, companionable creature," and there you are.

No, Philip is not a philanderer. But then, Philip is an intellectualized being and the physical has little attraction for him. He does not really live at all; for the most part, he merely exists in some kind of a tenuous world of his own making. The one time that one can actually hear him breathe is in the fifth book, when he is rolling dice with two niggers and a Mexican in a dirty alleyway in San Francisco, and barely escapes the gleaming steel razor that one of the enraged darkies brandishes at him. Philip actually beats it down the street; he is not wafted away in his usual indefinite fashion.

Mr. Benet occasionally inserts himself into his narrative and moralizes in a fashion that is not customary at present. For instance, the story is being told of Philip's idyllic love affair with Milly. And then Mr. Benet: "...whatever may be said by mild ministers on the danger of mothers sending their sons to college, there is no doubt that both precocious marriage and immature vice find a fifty times flaccider power of resistance in the honest young working man, or the sheltered boy at home." And so, in like strain, several times in the book.

Mr. Benet is a poet turned novelist. His conceptions are poetic; his phrasing sometimes exquisite. He is much given to sidetracking himself with fantasies and philosophies. His realism consists mainly of a few strong words, like "stink" and "prostitute," and one or two vivid descriptive passages. He belongs to the Goddamnit school in so far as he uses that expression freely in relegating everything that he considers old and outlived, in form, thought and expression, to the trash heap. But he does it charmingly. He is one of the Goddamners who make the wiser of the last generation smile paternally and say, "God bless 'em."

ADALINE KATZ.

MEDALLIONS IN CLAY

By RICHARD ALDINGTON.

(*Alfred A. Knopf*, 1921)

"THE beauty which you created in firm clear Greek or sonorous Latin," says Richard Aldington, invoking the classic and humanist poets whose work he has rendered in English, "resembles a frieze of Parian marble and plaques of elaborated bronze; these I have copied in clay medallions in memory of you.

"Dead poets, across the centuries a barbarian salutes you."

Mr. Aldington is almost the ideal barbarian for this work. Those who

admire the classically wrought free rhythms with which he has startled and charmed lovers of poetry in his own verse will find in this volume an artistry hardly less exquisite. He has produced a book which is deeply beautiful and reveals much of the real character of that poetry of older worlds which has been immortal enough to weather the dark and tempestuous centuries. He gives us glimpses, beautiful in themselves, of the ancient beauties of speech which we moderns, for all our gabbling of formulas about simplicity, sincerity and austerity, have been forgetting.

"Medallions in Clay" is a volume that will bring pleasure to lovers of poetry as the contemplation of ancient marbles gives pleasure to lovers of plastic art. Mr. Aldington has reproduced with a reverent hand the work of these old singers of Greece and learned Latin fabricators of the Renaissance. He has issued an honorable book.

One wishes inevitably that Mr. Aldington would write more of his own rare cadences and one grieves a little that he has spent so many hours and days in the resuscitation of the old work of other poets. But the service he has rendered is a distinguished service, and, after all, it took a good poet and a good poet's time to bring these medallions before us.

"Medallions in Clay" is a collection of poems translated from Anyte of Tegea, Meleager, contemporary imitators of Anacreon and the Latin poets of the Renaissance. The translation of Meleager's "Garland," Mr. Aldington asserts, is the most complete yet issued in English.

Space forbids the quoting of many excellent poems, particularly a number of pleasing and little known selections from the scholars of the Renaissance. I can only select at random a few of the translations which have struck my fancy.

Here is one of Meleager's epitaphs (III):

Tread lightly, friend. Here among the good rests an old man, tranquil in the inevitable sleep, Meleager. son of Eucrates, who joined together Love, the giver of sweet tears, the Muses and the happy Graces.

Tyre, daughter of the gods, and the sacred land of Gadara reared me to manhood and Cos, beloved of the Meropes, cherished my old age.

If you are a Syrian: Salam.
If you are a Phoenician: Audoni.
If you are a Greek: Khaire.
And do you say the same.

And here is "Thersis" from Anyte of Tegea:

In place of the happy bride-bed and sacred marriage songs, a mother laid her daughter in this marble tomb—

A girl who had your beauty and your stature, Thersis. And while we yet speak of her you also fade away.

And here is "A Miracle" from Meleager:

Lovely Diodorus, who cast the flame of desire upon the maidens, is caught by the bright eyes of Timarion; he is wounded by Love's bitter-sweet shaft.

I see a new miracle—bright fire burned by fire!

And here is "Engraved on a Statue of Aphrodite" by Anyte of Tegea:

This is the land of Cypris, since it pleases her to gaze forever from land over the glittering sea,

So that she may bear the sailors safe to land; and the sea quivers, looking upon her shining image.

And here, lastly, is "The Wine-Cup" from some imitator of Anacreon:

Hephaestus, graver-of-silver, make for me no panoply of war—what have I to do with battle?—but carve out for me a hollow wine-cup.

And fashion upon it for me no stars, neither the Waggon nor gloomy Orion. What are the Pleïades to me, what lovely Boötes?

But carve vines upon it for me and grape-clusters and the Maenads plucking them; grave upon it a wine-press and those that tread out the grapes, and laughing Pans, the golden Loves, the smiling Cytherean, and with fair Lyaeus, Eros and Aphrodite.

It is difficult to see how lovers of poetry can refrain from desiring a copy of this book.

J. BREWSTER VAN HORN

NOTE BOOK OF ANTON CHEKHOV

Translated by S. S. KOTELIANSKY and LEONARD WOOLF.

(*B. W. Huebsch*, 1921)

I FIND the best—or almost the best—recreation in the spilth of literature. Give me, for downright enjoyment, the journals of Emerson, the note-books of Hawthorne and Butler. Those "negligent" grandeurs and whimsies that they jotted down at odd moments have somehow more heat and fire than their finished and labored productions. The most delightful work of many writers (excepting poets, who print everything) is to be found in rough notes, tucked away for future reference and never used. All the note-books of artists in letters, painting, sculpture or music that have come to my notice, I have found fascinating.

And now comes Chekhov.

I am not saying that the note-book of Anton Chekhov is as good a note-book as Hawthorne's or Butler's. I am not saying that it is to be compared to Emerson's journals. It is not so good. But it is good enough to be a delightful volume. These jottings for use in stories, these notations and comments on human life as Chekhov observed it or imagined it, these opinions and dicta, are highly exhilarating reading matter. Chekhov was an original man and a shrewd observer of the world. He had an active and a fertile brain. His note-book is one of the best books of its kind I have encountered. He says things for which one remains thankful. He says things which amuse, startle and stimulate.

It may be that my own weakness for this sort of thing makes me recommend the book too heartiy. Some people cannot abide the disjointed, sketchy and disconnected matter which fills the notebooks of curious men like Chekhov and da Vinci.

But I find the book highly pleasurable. I recommend it without misgivings to those people who like note-books. It will not disappoint them.

From the hundreds of jottings I select the following, as being short and fairly typical:

The dog walked in the street and was ashamed of its crooked legs.

Life does not agree with philosophy: there is no hapiness which is not idleness and only the useless is pleasurable.

The grandfather is given fish to eat, and if it does not poison him and he remains alive, then all the family eat it.

Whenever he reads in the newspaper about the death of a great man, he wears mourning.

They undressed the corpse, but had no time to take the gloves off; a corpse in gloves.

A man, married to an actress, during a performance of a play in which his wife was acting, sat in a box, with beaming face, and from time to time got up and bowed to the audience.

He had a liaison with a woman of forty-five after which he began to write ghost stories.

A certain captain taught his daughter the art of fortification.

Everything which the old cannot enjoy is forbidden or considered wrong.

These are typical. There are at least five hundred notations, some as long as a page, in this book. It is good reading.

NARCISSE SMATHERS.